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THE WORKS

OF

DR. ISAAC BARROW.

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,

SUMMARY OF EACH DISCOURSE, NOTES, &c.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B. D.

VOL. IV.

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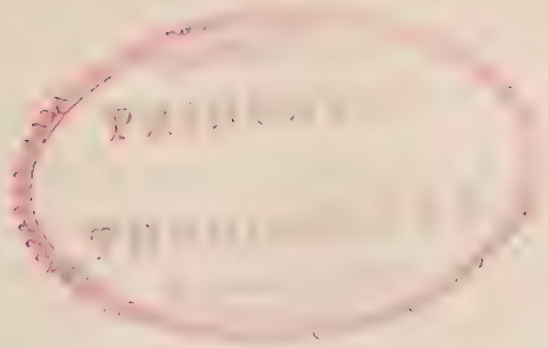

SERMONS.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXIV.

ROMANS, CHAP. XII.—VERSE 17.

MEN are too often afraid or ashamed of religious practice, whilst profaneness and wickedness grow outrageously bold. It is thought wisdom to compound with God, and conform to the world. Such proceeding shown to be built on very fallacious, absurd, and inconsistent grounds; whereby men abuse themselves, and would impose on others; it being the worst sort of hypocrisy, of vain-glory, of courage, &c.: such practice is particularly prejudicial to religion and virtue. The words of the text imply a precept of very large extent, touching all that part of our duty which is public and visible; for which we are accountable to the world; whereof man can take cognisance.

Its meaning and design first considered; which is, that we should have a special care of our external demeanor and conversation; so that it be exempted from any offence or blame; yea, rather that it be comely and commendable. The terms in which this duty is expressed are notably emphatical; we are directed *προνοεῖν*, *to provide*, to use a providence and forecast in the case; to deliberate ere we undertake any design; to consider who will be our spectators, and what influence our acts may have on their opinions: we are to provide; what

things? καλὰ, things fair and handsome, not only good, innocent, and inoffensive, but things pleasant and acceptable to well-disposed beholders: this point enlarged on.

But in this practice, to avoid misapprehensions we must distinguish: for it is not required that we should do all things openly, nor intended that we should do any thing vainly; but that we should act according to the nature and reason of things, with upright and pure intention; for the Apostle does not recommend us to imitate the Pharisees, who were reproved by our Lord for *doing their alms before men*, &c. out of vanity, and merely to procure their good opinion and praise.

No; in some cases we must be reserved, and keep our virtue close to ourselves; and always, under a fair show, there must be a real substance of good, together with an honest intention of heart.

Join the precept with others duly limiting it, and it imports that, with pure sincerity and simplicity, we should on all occasions discharge that part of our duty which is public, according to its nature and exigency, not abstaining from good deeds which cannot otherwise than openly be well performed, whose conspicuous performance is serviceable to the glory of God, and to the edification of our neighbors, &c.

There are indeed some duties, or works of piety and virtue, the nature of which directs that they should be private: these specified.

There are divers other duties, the discharge of which is necessarily open and visible: these specified.

Such also are divers positive duties; as the profession of our faith in God, and in his Revelation—the joining in public adoration of him—zeal in vindication of his honor, &c.—justice, equity, and ingenuousness in our dealings—gravity and modesty in our behavior—seasonable defence of truth, and opposition to error. Such things must be practised, as indispensable duties; but they cannot be done out of sight, &c. In the practice of

them, it is true, we should mainly respect the approving our conscience to God, without aiming at any interest or credit with men, as our reward.

But how much soever of our virtue or piety, out of humility or modesty, we may conceal, yet we must be careful in our conduct never to discover any vice or irreligion, by any notorious sins either of commission or omission.

To such practice according to the intent of St. Paul's injunction we are obliged: some considerations on the propriety of it are offered.

1. We may consider that the public is the proper, natural, and due place of goodness, which should dwell in the light, walking abroad freely and openly, that it may receive from rational creatures its due respect and praise, &c. On the other hand, it is proper for wickedness never to appear in view; but it should be confined to darkness and solitude, driven from all commerce with reasonable beings; since publicity only augments and aggravates it, &c.

2. We should consider that we cannot competently be good men, without approving ourselves such before the world. It commonly happens that invisible piety is no piety at all; and they who have little care to serve God publicly, have much less to serve him privately: besides, inasmuch as a great part of goodness actually consists in open and visible practice, there can be no real integrity, where so much of duty is wanting: this topic enlarged on.

3. A great care of our good behavior before men is necessary in regard to Almighty God, and his honor; which is prejudiced and impaired by our failing in this respect. The Apostle prescribes that *whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God:* and well he might, seeing that this is the most excellent work of which we are capable; nor can we do this better than by a visible good conversation: reasons of this given.

We cannot really glorify God otherwise than by open practice; for glory requires a public stage: wherefore two things must concur for this. 1. We must be good men: 2. we must *openly* be such.

We must be good men, because otherwise our commendation will have no worth or weight; for *praise is not comely in the mouth of sinners.*

We must be good openly, avowing God in practice which conduces to his honor, otherwise no glory can accrue to him from our goodness. God himself says, *whoso offereth me praise, he glorifieth me:* and how can praise be offered, or to what purpose, unless so as to occasion in others worthy conceptions and due affections towards God? In such a manner the holy psalmist offered it. (Ps. xxii. 22. &c.) And this motive is by the great masters of our Christian practice frequently urged: examples given.

On the other hand, by stifling our virtue, in an open compliance with sin, or neglect of our duty, we greatly dishonor God; for thereby we in effect deny him and desert him, intimating our mean opinion and small affection towards him, &c.: this point enlarged on. But,

4. We should be careful of our good behavior in the sight of men, that we may thereby maintain the dignity and repute of our Christian profession, which by our bad or negligent demeanor will be disparaged and disgraced.

It is evident to reason that a visible practice must recommend the goodness of the rule; and it is a demonstrative proof that we are heartily persuaded of its truth; which is no small credit to any profession: this topic enlarged on.

Contrariwise, the defect of good conversation before men in Christians, is on many accounts disgraceful to our religion. For,

It tempts men to judge that we ourselves do not heartily believe its truth or value its worth, &c.: so that it will be ex-

posed to the censures of being no better than a fond device and a barren notion, ineffectual and insignificant to any good purpose. What greater mischief therefore can we do, what heavier guilt can we contract, than by working such reproaches against God's heavenly truth ?

SERMON LXIV.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.

ROMANS, CHAP. XII.—VERSE 17.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

THE world apparently is come to that pass, that men commonly are afraid or ashamed of religious practice, hardly daring to own their Maker by a conscientious observance of his laws. While profaneness and wickedness are grown outrageously bold, so that many 'declare their sin as Sodom;' piety and virtue are become pitifully bashful, so that how few have the heart and the face openly to maintain a due regard to them? Men in nothing appear so reserved and shy as in avowing their conscience, in discovering a sense of their duty, in expressing any fear of God, any love of goodness, any concern for their own soul. It is wisdom, as they conceive, to compound with God, and to collude with the world; reserving for God some place in their heart, or yielding unto him some private acknowlegement; while in their public demeanor they conform to the world, in commission of sin, or neglect of their duty; supposing that God may be satisfied with the invisible part of his service, while men are gratified by visible compliance with their ungracious humors.

Such proceeding is built on divers very fallacious, absurd, and inconsistent grounds or pretences; whereby men egregiously do abuse themselves and would impose on others; namely these, and the like:

They would not, by a fair show and semblance of piety, give cause to be taken for hypocrites; whereas, by dissembling their conscience, and seeming to 'have no fear of God before their eyes,' they incur an hypocrisy no less criminal in nature, but far more dangerous in consequence, than is that which they pretend to decline.

They would not be apprehended vain-glorious for affecting to serve God in the view of men; whereas often at the bottom of their demeanor a most wretched and worse than pharisaical vain-glory doth lie; they forbearing the performance of their duty merely to shun the censure or to gain the respect of the vilest and vainest persons.

They would be deemed exceedingly honest and sincere, because forsooth all their piety is cordial, pure, and void of sinister regards to popular esteem; whereas partial integrity is gross nonsense; whereas no pretence can be more vain, than that we hold a faithful friendship or hearty respect for God, whom we openly disclaim or disregard; whereas also it is easily discernible, that although their piety is not, yet their impiety is popular, and affected to ingratiate with men.

They would be taken for men of brave, courageous, and masculine spirits, exalted above the weaknesses of superstition and scrupulosity; whereas indeed, out of the basest cowardice, and a dread to offend sorry people, they have not a heart to act according to their duty, their judgment, their best interest.

They would seem very modest in concealing their virtue; while yet they are most impudent in disclosing their want of conscience; while they are so presumptuous toward God, as 'to provoke him to his face' by their disobedience; while they are not ashamed to wrong and scandalise their brethren by their ill behavior.

They would not be uncivil or discourteous in thwarting the mind and pleasure of their company; as if in the mean time they might be most rude toward God in affronting his will and authority; as if any rule of civility could oblige a man to forfeit his salvation; as if it were not rather most cruel discourtesy and barbarous inhumanity to countenance or encourage any man in courses tending to his ruin.

They would not be singular and uncouth, in discosting from

the common road or fashion of men; as if it were better to leave the common duty than the common faults of men; as if wisdom and virtue were ever the most vulgar things; as if the way to heaven were the broadest and the most beaten way; as if rarity should abate the price of good things; as if conspiracy in rebellion against God might justify or excuse the fact; as if it were advisable to march to hell in a troop, or comfortable to lie there for ever among the damned crew of associates in wickedness.

They cannot endure to be accounted zealots or bigots in religion; as if a man could love or fear God too much; or be over-faithful and careful in serving him; as if to be most earnest and solicitous (not in promoting our own fancies, but) in discharging our plain duties could be justly reproachable, or were not indeed highly commendable.

These things I may hereafter fully declare; in the mean time it is manifest that such a practice is extremely prejudicial to religion and goodness; so that it may be very useful to employ our meditations on this text of the Apostle, which directly doth oppose and prohibit it.

The same text he otherwhere (in his second Epistle to the Corinthians) doth repeat in the same terms, (only inserting a clause more fully explaining his sense,) backing his precept with his own example; for we, saith he there, did so manage the business of collecting and dispensing alms, as 'to avoid that any man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us; providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men.'

The words do imply a precept of very large extent, and touching a great part of our duty; even all thereof which is public and visible; for which we are accountable to the world, whereof man can take any cognisance; which concerneth all our speech and conversation, all our dealing and commerce, all our deportment relating to human society, civil or spiritual.

I shall first a little consider its meaning and design; then I shall propose reasons and inducements to its observance; then I shall declare the folly of those principles and pretences which obstruct that observance.

I. The meaning of it is, that we should have a special care

of our external demeanor and conversation, which cometh under the view and observation of men; that it be exempted from any offence or blame; yea, that it be comely and commendable.

The terms in which it is expressed are notably emphatical; we are directed προνοεῖν, 'to provide,' to use a providence and forecast in the case: ere we undertake any design, we should deliberate with ourselves, and consider on what theatre we shall act, what persons will be spectators, what conceits our practice may raise in them, and what influence probably it will have on them. We should not rush on into the public view with a precipitant rashness, or blind negligence, or contemptuous disregard, not caring who standeth in our way, who marketh what we do, what consequence our proceeding may have on the score of its being public and visible: we should advise beforehand, lay our business, and on set purpose order our behavior with a regard to those to whose sight and notice we expose it, foreseeing how our actions may affect or incline them. So we must provide; what things? καλὰ, things fair and handsome; things not only good, innocent, and inoffensive to the sight of men; but goodly, pleasant, and acceptable to well-disposed beholders; such as our Apostle doth otherwhere recommend, when he chargeth us to regard, ὅσα σεμνὰ, 'whatever things are venerable,' ὅσα προσφιλῆ, 'whatever things are lovely,' ὅσα εὔφημα, 'whatever things are of good report,' εἴ τις ἔπαινος, 'whatever things are laudable;' and when he doth exhort us to walk εὐσχημόνως, handsomely and decently, in a comely garb and fashion of life; this may add an obligation to some things not directly prescribed by God, which yet may serve to adorn religion, but it cannot detract any thing from what God hath commanded; it doth comprehend all instances of piety and virtue practicable before men; it certainly doth exclude all commission of sin, and omission of duty; for that nothing can be fair or handsome which is ugly in God's sight, which doth not suit to his holy will.

Such things we must provide, ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων, 'before all men;' not only before some men, to whom we bear a particular respect, of whom we stand in awe, on whom we have a design; but universally before all men, as having a due con-

sideration of all those on whom our deportment may have influence; not despising or disregarding the observation of the meanest or most inconsiderable person whatever.

But in this practice, to avoid misapprehensions, we must distinguish; for it is not required that we should do all things openly, nor intended that we should do any thing vainly; but that we should act constantly according to the nature and reason of things, with upright and pure intention: the Apostle doth not mean that in our practice we should resemble the pharisees, whom our Lord reproveth for 'doing their alms before men,' for loving 'to pray standing in the synagogues,' for 'doing all their works to be seen of men;' performing those acts of piety openly 'in the corners of the street,' which should have been done secretly 'in the closet;' and so doing them out of vanity and ambitious design, to procure the good opinion and praise of men: he doth not intend that we should assume a formal garb of singular virtue; that we should aim to seem better than we are, counterfeiting any point of religion or virtue; that we should affect to appear even as good as we are, exposing all our piety to common view: that we should 'sound a trumpet before us,' making an ostentation of any good deeds, catching at reputation or applause for them; that we should do any commendable thing chiefly to obtain the good opinion of the world, or to escape its censure: infinitely far it was from the Apostle's intention that we should be 'like those whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness;' that is, like those pharisees, who 'did outwardly appear righteous, but within were full of hypocrisy and iniquity:' No;

In some cases we must be reserved, and keep our virtue close to ourselves; and ever under a fair show there must be a real substance of good, together with an honest intention of heart; a good conscience must always lie at the bottom of a good conversation; the outside must be good, but the best side must be inward; we must endeavor to sanctify our life and conversation, but we must especially labor to purify our hearts and affections.

Join the precept with others duly limiting it, and it doth import that with pure sincerity and unaffected simplicity (void

of any sinister or sordid design) we should in all places, on all occasions, in all matters, carefully discharge that part of our duty which is public, according to its nature, season, and exigency, that is, publicly; not abstaining from the practice of those good deeds, which cannot otherwise than openly be well performed; or the conspicuous performance whereof is absolutely needful in regard to God's law and the satisfaction of our conscience, is plainly serviceable to the glory of God, is very conducible to the edification of our neighbor, or which may be useful to good purposes concurrent with those principal ends: we should as good trees from a deep root of true piety, in due season naturally, as it were, shoot forth good fruits, not only pleasant to the sight, but savory to the taste, and wholesome for use; as St. Paul, who, as he saith of himself, that he 'did provide things honest in the sight of all men,' so he also doth affirm that 'his rejoicing was this, the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity—he had his conversation in the world.'

There are indeed some duties, or works of piety and virtue, the nature whereof directeth, that in the practice of them we should be reserved; such as those wherein the world is not immediately concerned, and which may with best advantage be transacted between God and our own souls; as private devotion, meditation on God's word and will, the discussion of our consciences, voluntary exercises of penitence, and the like: such also be those wherein the intervention or notice of few persons is required; as deeds of particular charity in dispensing alms, good advice, friendly reproof; the which sort of duties our Lord hath taught us to perform 'in secret,' or as closely as we may; studiously keeping our observance of them from the eyes of men; thereby assuring our sincerity to ourselves, and guarding our practice from any taint of vanity or suspicion of hypocrisy; as also in some cases avoiding to cause prejudice or offence to our neighbors: 'Take heed,' saith our Lord, 'that ye do not your alms before men;' and, 'Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet;' and, 'Thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast;' and, 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.'

But there are divers other duties, the discharge whereof ne-

cessarily is notorious and visible; the public being the stage on which they are to be acted; the transaction of them demanding the intercourse of many persons, who are the objects or instruments of them, or are somewise concerned in them: such is that negative duty, of a general nature and vast comprehension, which we may call innocence; that is, a total abstinence from sin, or forbearance to transgress any divine command; which is a part of Job's character, 'That man was perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil:' the which duty, being to be practised at all times in every place, cannot avoid being observable.

Such are also divers positive duties; for such is the profession of our faith in God, and acknowlegement of his heavenly truth, revealed in the gospel of our blessed Saviour; which is styled 'confessing our Lord before men,' and is, as St. Paul telleth us, indispensably requisite to salvation.

Such is joining in that public adoration, whereby the honor and authority of God are upheld in the world with seemly expressions of reverence; the which is to be performed solemnly, and, as the holy psalmist speaketh, 'in the midst of the congregation.'

Such is zeal in vindication of God's honor, when occasion requireth, from blasphemous aspersions, or from scandalous offences against it.

Such are justice, equity, fidelity, and ingenuity in our dealings; meekness, gentleness, patience, kindness, and courtesy in our converse; peaceableness in our carriage, and charitable beneficence; the objects whereof are most general, according to those apostolical precepts, 'That our moderation' (or our equity and ingenuity) 'be known unto all men;' that we 'show all meekness to all men;' that 'we must not strive, but be gentle unto all men;' that we be 'patient toward all men;' that we 'pursue peace with all men;' that 'as we have opportunity, we should do good unto all men;' should 'abound in love one towards another, and towards all men;' should ever 'follow that which is good, both among ourselves and to all men;' should 'liberally distribute to the saints and to all men:' in performing which so general duties, how can a man pass *incognito*, how can he so deal with all men indiscernibly?

Such are likewise gravity and modesty in our behavior;

sweetness, soberness, aptness to profit and edify the hearers in our discourse; moderation and temperance in our corporeal enjoyments; industry in our business and the works of our calling; integrity in the management of any office or trust committed to us; a constant practice of which virtues is not only enjoined to us as our particular duty, but for public example.

Such are seasonable defence of the truth, and opposing of error; the commendation of virtue, and reprehension of notorious sin, with the like.

Such things must be practised, because indispensable duties; but they cannot be done out of sight, or barring the observation of men; they do involve publicness; they carry a light and lustre with them, attracting all eyes to regard them; it is as impossible to conceal them as to hide the sun from all the world, or to 'conceal a city that is set on a hill;' for 'nothing,' as St. Chrysostom saith, 'doth render a man so illustrious, although he ten thousand times would be hid, as an open practice of virtue.'*

Wherefore 'the works of mercy,' saith St. Austin, 'the affection of charity, the sanctity of godliness, the incorruptness of chastity, the moderation of sobriety, these are perpetually to be held, whether we are in the public or at home; whether before men or in the closet, whether we speak or keep silence.†

In the practice of them, it is true, we mainly should respect the approving our conscience to God, with expectation of our recompense from him; not being much concerned in the judgment or pleasure of men, purely considered in themselves; not aiming at any interest of credit or profit from them as a reward of our work; 'We ought,' as St. Austin saith, while we do good, 'to be seen, but we ought not to do it that we may be seen; the end of our joy, the bound of our comfort, should not be there; so that we should think ourselves to have obtained the whole fruit of a good work, when we have been seen and commended:' No, whatever we do, we should, as the Apostle directeth, do it 'as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; doing it heartily as to the Lord, and not

* Chrys. in Matt. v. 16. † Aug. in Ep. 1. Joh. Tract. 8.

unto men; knowing that of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance.'

Yet nothing in the mean time should hinder us from performing such necessary duties; strictly and exactly, with our most diligent care and endeavor, even in that light which their nature doth carry in it.

How much soever of our virtue or piety out of humility or modesty we may conceal, yet we must be careful of discovering any vice or irreligion, either by notoriously committing any thing forbidden by God, or omitting any thing commanded by him.

This we should not do on any terms, on any pretence whatever; no wicked fashion should engage us, no bad example should inveigle us, no favor of men should allure us, no terror should scare us thereto; we should not out of fear, out of shame, out of complaisance, out of affected prudence or politic design; out of deference to the quality, dignity, or authority of any person; out of regard to any man's desire or pleasure; we should not to decline offence, envy, blame, reproach, ill treatment, or on any such account, comply in any sinful practice, wave any duty, neglect any season of performing a good deed, whereby we may glorify God, or edify our neighbor, or promote the welfare of our own soul.

To such a practice, according to the intent of St. Paul's injunction, we are obliged; and thereto we may be induced by divers considerations, particularly by those which we shall now propose.

1. We may consider that the public is the proper, natural, and due place of goodness; it should dwell in the light, it should walk freely and boldly everywhere, it should expose itself to open view, that it may receive from rational creatures its due approbation, respect, and praise; it by publicness is advanced, and the more it doth appear, the more beautiful, the more pleasant, the more useful it is; yielding the fairer lustre, the greater influence, the better effects; thereby diffusing and propagating itself, becoming exemplary, instructive, and admonitive; drawing lovers and admirers to it; exciting and encouraging men to embrace it: wherefore it is very absurd that it should skulk or sneak; it is a great damage to the public, that it should retire from common notice.

On the other hand, it is proper for wickedness never to appear or to show its head in view; it should be confined to darkness and solitude, under guard of its natural keepers, shame and fear; it should be exterminated from all conversation among rational creatures, and banished to the infernal shades: publicness doth augment and aggravate it; the more it is seen, the more ugly, the more loathsome, the more noxious it is; its odious shape being disclosed, its noisome steams being dispersed, its pestilent effects being conveyed thereby.

Wherefore to smother virtue (that fair child of light) in privacy, and to vent sin ('the works of darkness') openly, is quite to transplace things out of their natural situation and order; according to which we are taught by our Lord, that 'he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest;' and by St. Paul, that 'every one who doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved:' so indeed it is, and will be, where conscience retaineth its due sway and force; where a due respect and reverence are preserved for goodness.

As that any good cometh from detection of sin is an accidental advantage; so that any mischief doth ever follow the manifestation of virtue is an unnatural abuse; the which may well be prevented: there can be no danger of acting any good most evidently, if we do withal act sincerely, having purified our hearts from dishonest intention and from ambitious vanity; the fear of which should not wholly drive virtue under the hatches and bring vice on the stage. But,

2. We should consider that we cannot really in any competent or tolerable measure be good men, without approving ourselves such in our conversation before men.

Whatever may be pretended, it commonly doth happen, and it ever is to be suspected, that the invisible piety which is not accompanied with visible conscientiousness is false, or is no piety at all; or that they who have little care and conscience to serve God publicly have much less to serve him privately; or that such as betray a scandalous negligence of their ways will hardly maintain a careful watch over their hearts; for the same causes (be it profane infidelity, or looseness of principles, or supine incogitancy, or sloth, or stupidity) which dispose

them to disregard God and his laws before the world, more effectually will incline them to neglect God and forget their duty by themselves, where beside their own conscience there is no witness, no judge, no censor to encourage or reproach them. But admit it possible, and put case, that sometimes the heart and conversation may not run parallel; that a man may better govern his interior thoughts and affections than he doth manage his exterior behavior and actions; that a man secretly may cleave to God, although he seemeth openly to desert him; yet this will not suffice to constitute or denominate a man good; because much of goodness, as we have showed, even the nobler half thereof, (that part whereby God is most glorified, and whereby the world is most benefited,) doth lie in open and visible practice; that virtue therefore must be very imperfect, that obedience must be very lame, which is deficient in so great a part.

As there can be no fair pretence to goodness, where so little thereof is conspicuous; so there can be no real integrity thereof, where so much of duty is wanting.

Our Lord hath taught us that 'every tree is known by its fruit;' and St. James saith, that 'faith is showed by works;' and so it is, that a man can hardly be good in any reasonable degree without appearing such. Impiety may, but piety cannot be quite concealed. As gold may be counterfeited, (for all is not gold that glistereth,) yet true gold always doth look like gold; so although bad men sometimes may seem good, yet good men also must seem such, appearing in their own native temper and lustre.

Goodness cannot be disguised in the shape of evil, because simplicity and innocence are essential ingredients of it; any mixture of notorious sin, any visible neglect of duty assuring (yea formally making) a want of it, or a real defect therein: it may be daubed with false aspersions, it may be dimmed by the breath of unjust and uncharitable censures; but wiping them off, its natural hue certainly will appear.

Wherefore if we would satisfy ourselves in our own consciences, or justify ourselves to others, that we are truly good, we must (without partiality, or distinguishing between public and private) like the holy psalmist, 'have respect unto all God's

commandments;' we, like Zachary and Elizabeth, must 'walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;' we must, like David, 'accomplish all God's wills;' we must observe St. Paul's rule, to abstain, ἀπὸ παντὸς εἴδους πονηροῦ, from both every kind of evil, and every bad appearance.' But farther,

3. A great care of our good behavior before men is necessary in regard to Almighty God; whose just interest is preserved, whose due homage is payed, whose honor is promoted thereby; the same being greatly prejudiced and impaired by the contrary defailance.

It is a clear point of justice toward God, as to render all obedience to him, so particularly that which consisteth in an open acknowlegement and service of him; for as he made and doth preserve not only the heart, but the tongue, the members, the whole man, so all must concur in rendering their tribute of reverence and service to him.

The Apostle doth prescribe that 'whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God;' and well he might, seeing that to glorify God is indeed to execute the main design of our creation, to apply our faculties to their best use, to achieve the most proper and most excellent work whereof we are capable; to do that which is the worthiest and happiest employment of angels, which all the company of heaven, with most ardent desire, with most zealous ambition, with restless endeavor, doth pursue; and this we cannot better, we cannot otherwise do, than by an apparent good conversation. For,

He that apparently in all his actions maketh conscience of obeying God's laws, thereby doth evidence his firm persuasion concerning the existence and providence of God; doth adhere to him against all adversaries of piety, and all temptations to rebellion; doth avow his sovereign majesty and authority; doth yield him due veneration and obedience; doth show right apprehensions of him, and just affections towards him; implying that he doth most highly esteem him, doth most heartily love him, doth chiefly dread him, doth repose his trust and hope in him for all his happiness; hath a great opinion of his wisdom, a great awe of his power, a great sense of his goodness; the which practice is in itself a direct and formal glorification of God, in his own person.

He also thereby doth farther promote the glory of God, instructing, exciting, and encouraging others to the like practice of deferring respect and service to God; for naturally men have such a capacity, such aptitude, such proclivity to religion, (or to the acknowlegement and worship of their Maker,) that when they behold others seriously and earnestly pursuing it, they are easily drawn to conspire therein; especially those who are not utterly perverted and corrupted by ill custom.

And whereas good conversation hath a native beauty affecting beholders with delight; whereas the fruits of virtue have a pleasing sweetness, grateful to all who taste them; men from that sight and that sense will presently be moved to commend the wisdom, and to bless the goodness of him, who was pleased to institute so excellent a religion, to enact so beneficial laws, to prescribe so wholesome duties to us: for 'when,' saith the most divine father,* 'an infidel shall see thee, a believer, to be *κατεσταλμένον*—staunch, sober, orderly, he will be astond, and will say, In truth, great is the God of Christians: What men hath he made! what persons out of what persons hath he made them! how from men hath he made them angels! If one abuse them, they do not rail; if one smite them, they do not resent; if one injure them, they pray for him that doeth the offence; they know not to remember ill turns, they skill not to be vain, they have not learnt to lie, they cannot abide to forswear, or rather to swear at all, but sooner would choose to have their tongue cut out, than to let an oath slip out of their mouth.'

So may we really glorify God; and otherwise than by open practice we cannot do it; for glory doth require a public stage; it implying, as Seneca saith, 'the consent of many worthy persons' declaring their esteem; it being, as Cicero defineth it, 'the agreeing praise of good men, with an incorrupted vote judging well of an excellent virtue.'

Wherefore toward our being enabled to glorify God, two things must concur; that we be good men, and that we be openly such.

That we be good men, because otherwise our commendation

* Chrys. *ἀνδρ. θ'.* (p. 524.)

will have no worth, or weight; for 'praise is not comely in the mouth of sinners:' it is no ornament to be commended by ill men, to whose words little regard is due, little trust can be given.

That we be good openly, avowing God in practice conducing to his honor; otherwise no glory can accrue to him from our goodness: we may serve God, and please him in private; but we cannot by that service glorify him; at least at present, and here in this world. It is true, the closest piety will yield glory to God at the last, when 'our Lord shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe;' but to design such a future glorification of God is not enough; it is our duty to glorify God now, that we may be rewarded for it, and that he may requite us with glory hereafter.

God himself telleth us in the psalm, 'Whoso offereth praise, he glorifieth me;' and how can praise be offered, or to what purpose will it be offered, otherwise than apparently, either in word or deed, by oral or by real expression, to the ears or to the eyes of men, so as to occasion in them the production of worthy conceptions and due affections toward God? In such a manner the holy man did offer it, who said, 'I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee; I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation:' he did it sometimes with his mouth, which is a notable part of our conversation; but we may do it continually by our life; for, 'He,' saith St. Austin, 'who praiseth God with his tongue, cannot do that always; but he that praiseth God by his manners can always do it.'*

This motive is by the great masters of our Christian practice frequently urged; for,

St. Paul wisheth the Philippians 'to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God;' he prayeth for the Thessalonians, that 'God would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

* Aug. in 1. Ep. Joh. Tr. 8.

might be glorified in them;' he particularly doth incite the Corinthians to works of charity, that by that ministration men might be induced to glorify God, rendering him thankful praise for their beneficial obedience.

St. Peter likewise doth exhort all Christians 'to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they might by their good works, which they should behold, glorify God, in the day of visitation,' (that is, perhaps, when they carefully do view and reflect on them.)

Our Lord himself thus chargeth his disciples, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;' they did observe his command, and the effect did follow, many being converted to God no less by the radiant integrity of their life, than by the persuasive efficacy of their doctrine: and, 'In this,' saith our Lord again, 'is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit:' what fruit was that? what but of good works, visible to the eye and perceptible to the taste; otherwise how could men thence find cause to glorify God?

In fine, this is declared to be the peculiar design of our religion, or of the whole Christian institution; to this end we are made 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that we should show forth the praises (or virtues) of him, who hath called us out of darkness to his marvellous light;' not only by our profession, but in our practice declaring his goodness.

On the other hand, by stifling our virtue and conscience, in an open compliance with sin, or neglect of our duty, we greatly shall dishonor God; for thereby in effect we deny him and desert him; we injure his majesty, and disclaim our allegiance to him; we intimate our mean opinion of him, and small affection to him; we betray our want of reverence to his excellency, of dread to his greatness, of love to his goodness, of hope in his promises and gracious overtures of mercy, of fear in regard to his severe justice and fierce menaces; so immediately we dishonor him, and we thereby also do countenance disrespect and disobedience to him; and our behavior tendeth to produce or to confirm the like irreligious dispositions of mind and impious

practices in others; so that with horrible disingenuity we cross the design of our creation, and violate our greatest obligations toward our Maker.

Indeed what greater affront or more heinous indignity can we offer to God, than openly before the world, by the most real expression of our works, to deny and disown him; than to be notoriously ashamed or afraid to avow him for our Lord and Master; than to express no sense of our duty to him, no reverence of his authority, no gratitude for his benefits to us; than visibly to prefer any other consideration or worldly advantage before a regard to his will and pleasure?

In this open sin doth outgo private wickedness, and putteth down even the worst hypocrisy, (beside its own,) that it not only offendeth God, but sorely woundeth his honor, and exposeth his glorious name to contempt; by which consideration such miscarriages are frequently aggravated in holy Scripture; so in the Prophets God complaineth of his people, for having by their scandalous crimes 'profaned his holy name among the heathen;' so St. Paul expostulateth with the Jew, 'Thou that boastest of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?' so Nathan told David, that God would punish him, 'because by his bad deed he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.' But,

4. We should be careful of our good behavior in the sight of men, that we may thereby maintain the dignity and repute of our Christian profession, which by our naughty or negligent demeanor will be much disparaged and disgraced.

Most evident it is to reason that a visible practice, conformable to the rules of our religion, cannot otherwise than exceedingly commend and grace it; for how can the goodness of a rule more surely obtain its due commendation, than from its being applied to observable practice and experience?

Assuredly charity, meekness, humility, patience, sobriety, discretion, and all Christian virtues, as in themselves they are very amiable and venerable to all men, as they yield great benefit and much pleasure to those whom their consequences do touch; so they do ingratiate the law which prescribeth them, they bring esteem to the principles whence they are derived; 'he,' as the Apostle saith, 'that in these things serveth Christ,

is both acceptable to God and approved of men,' as the follower of a most excellent rule.

We may also consider that a conspicuous practice, according to our religion, is a demonstrative proof that we do seriously and firmly embrace it, or that we are heartily and steadily persuaded of its truth; which is no small credit to any profession; arguing that it hath a good foundation in reason, apt to bottom and sustain a solid faith.

And as thereby we pregnantly do evidence that we ourselves do highly value the noble privileges, the excellent promises, the precious rewards exhibited in the gospel; so we thereby do breed a like esteem in others; on whom the authority of men apparently virtuous and conscientious infallibly will have a forcible influence.

Such a practice will have a great stroke toward evincing the truth and reality, the perfect excellency, the notable strength and efficacy of our religion; plainly showing that it is not a mere name, an idle pretence, a weak fancy, a dry speculation, a chimerical dream; but a vigorous and masculine principle, able to produce most worthy fruits of substantial goodness, profitable to men; conducible to our own welfare, and to the benefit of others.

As gallant actions, becoming a noble rank, elevated above the vulgar level, do illustrate and dignify nobility itself; so doth a worthy conversation, beseeming our high station in the heavenly kingdom, our near alliances to God, those splendid titles and glorious privileges assigned to every faithful Christian in the evangelical charter, render our state admirable, and make it seem an excellent advantage to be a Christian.

Hence in the apostolical writings an observance of the evangelical laws is so much and often enforced by this consideration; for on this account we are exhorted to a careful discharge of our duty, that 'we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;' we are urged to 'have our conversation worthy of the gospel;' to 'walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,' to behave ourselves 'as worthily becometh saints,' (that is, persons instituted in so holy a religion, and designed to so peculiar excellency in virtue;) to 'walk as children of the light,' (that is, of truth and knowlege

revealed from heaven ;) to 'walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory ;' 'worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work ;' the which enforcements of duty do imply a visible practice, producing the visible effects of ornament and credit to our religion, recommending it to the minds and consciences of men.

Contrariwise, the defect of good conversation before men in Christians is on divers accounts disgraceful to our religion. For,

It tempteth men to judge that we ourselves do not heartily believe its truth or value its worth ; that we do not approve its doctrine for reasonable, or take its advantages for considerable ; or deem the name and state of a Christian to be honorable ; seeing we are not concerned to own them, or do not care to engage our reputation in avowing and abetting them in that way which doth best signify our mind and meaning : for men certainly will judge of our sense not so much by what we say as from what we do ; not by our verbal profession or pretence, but from our practice, as the surest indication of our heart.

Wherefore when they hear us to confess our faith, and see us act like infidels, they will be forced to esteem us either for subdolous hypocrites or for inconsistent fools ; who assume the name of Christians, and pretend to great advantages thence, yet in effect do not mind or regard them ; highly commending the rules of our religion, but not at all observing them ; greatly admiring the example of our Saviour, but not caring to imitate it ; describing heaven for a most happy place, but not striving to get thither in the sole way which our Lord prescribeth, of faithful and diligent obedience to his precepts.

Seeing, I say, this repugnance between our profession and our practice, will induce men to charge us with hypocrisy or folly ; and if the professors be taken for counterfeits or fools, the profession itself will hardly scape from being held imposture or folly.

Our religion at least will thence be exposed to the censures of being no better than a fond device, and a barren notion, unpracticable, ineffectual, and insignificant to any good purpose.

The visible misbehavior, I say, of Christians will assuredly

derive obloquy and reproach on Christianity, if not as bad, yet as vain, impotent, impertinent and useless; especially those who are disaffected to it will hence take advantage to insult on it with contemptuous scorn; To what, will they say, do your fine rules serve? what effects do your glorious hopes produce? where are the fruits of that holy faith and heavenly doctrine which you so extol and magnify?

Whereas also bad conversation commonly doth not only deprive men of the benefits which our religion promiseth, but doth carry with it hurtful fruits; men that see or feel them will be apt to impute them to religion.

If a Christian be unjust, censorious, factious, anywise offensive or troublesome, although irreligion be the cause of such things, yet religion must bear the blame, and they presently exclaim,

Quantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

Whence St. Paul (who as a powerful instructor doth impress matters of duty by the most proper motives) doth often and on all occasions urge this consideration; he chargeth us 'to give no offence in any thing, that the ministry (or evangelical dispensation) be not blamed,' or exposed to the censure of any captious Momus; he biddeth us to forbear harsh judgment and all uncharitable dealing, that 'our good be not evil spoken of;' he presseth the discharge of our duty in each calling and relation, that by neglect thereof the gospel be not defamed: 'Let,' saith he, 'as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed;' and, 'Let women be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed;' and, 'I will that younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, (so as) to give no occasion to the adversary (that is, to persons disaffected to Christianity) to speak reproachfully' (of it); which discourse, by clear parity of reason, may be applied to any other state or relation.

Now seriously what greater mischief can we do, what heavier guilt may we contract, than by working dishonor to God's adorable name, than by casting reproach on God's heavenly

truth, than by drawing a scandal on that holy religion, which the Son of God came down from heaven to establish, for the glory of God and salvation of mankind? Surely next after directly blaspheming God, and defying religion with our own mouths, the next crime is to make others to do so, or in effect to do it by their profane tongues.

There remain divers arguments of very great moment, which the time will not suffer me to urge; and therefore I must reserve them to another occasion.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXV.

ROMANS, CHAP. XII.—VERSE 17.

To what has been said on this topic, it may be added, that the real interests of piety and virtue exact from us a good conversation before men, as the most effectual way of upholding and advancing them.

1. The powerful effects of example, both for attraction to good, and seduction to evil, dilated on. The visible succor and countenance of many, espousing the cause of goodness by their practice, will assuredly bring it into vogue and fashion; yea sometimes the example of a few will do it a great service, the rarity giving a special lustre to their virtue.

A good conversation notifies good men to one another, and combines them in a party, for the aid and protection of virtue; they balancing the opposition of wicked men: but it requires open, stout, and hearty friends, not secret and timorous well-wishers.

Wherefore if we would not be guilty of its ruin, we must stand up firmly and openly to uphold it: for the declension of piety is perhaps chiefly ascribable to the lukewarmness of men.

II. Charity towards our neighbor also demands from us a great care of our conversation before men.

This great law of Christianity obliges us earnestly to further our neighbor's good of all kinds; especially that which is the greatest, the welfare of his soul: and how can we better do this, than by attracting him to the performance of his duty to God, and withdrawing him from the commission of sin? It is a

precept of charity, that we should *pursue things wherewith one may edify another.* The Apostles enjoin, that we should *exhort one another, and edify one another,* &c. But words will hardly ever move without practice, though practice will sometimes persuade without words.

Again; we are frequently commanded to shun *the giving any offence,* or *the putting a stumbling-block in the way of our brother:* this applied to the case in question. Charity farther obliges us, on just cause, and in due season, to check and reprove our neighbor, to *warn the disorderly,* as the Apostle says. So far we are *the keepers of our brethren,* and it is a charge incumbent on us by all good means to preserve them from the worst ills.

III. But if charity will not move us, yet justice, exacting from us a care of this duty, should constrain us: for exemplary and edifying conversation is a debt which we owe to the world. When without our own hurt or inconvenience we can do considerable good to our neighbor, he has a title to it, granted by the common author of our nature. But to set an ill example before him, or, which is almost the same thing, to withhold from him a good one, is a great iniquity and wrong done to him: it is, as if one should offer a cup of poison to his neighbor, and be his taster; as if one should carry him out of his way, or refuse to set him right if he lost it, &c.

The injustice of this practice may also farther appear from its opposition to that pity which all men owe to each other; as well as from its conjunction with the basest and most injurious kind of flattery: these two points enlarged on. Again; a good conversation before men is a part of that due respect which we owe to them: it is St. Peter's injunction that we *honor all men;* and as the wise man declares, *he that despiseth his neighbor sinneth.*

IV. Let us consider that this duty is a public benefit; a great advantage to the world.

It is not only a good office of charity to this or that man, but it lays a general obligation on our country, on our age, on posterity itself; on which an exemplary virtue may have notable influence. The benefits which may arise from the examples of good men in this point of view dilated on. Instances of the holy Apostles.

V. A care of our conversation in the sight of men is needful for the preservation of our good name and fair repute among them.

A good name is in holy Scripture represented as a special gift and blessing of God, bestowed in recompense of piety and virtue. Also reason and experience concur in showing it to be a valuable possession, &c. Wherefore in duty and wisdom we should be careful of preserving so precious a jewel. But how can men conceive and keep a good opinion of us, otherwise than from a view of our worthy qualities and good deeds? *Ye shall know them by their fruits,* is our Saviour's own rule. This topic enlarged on.

VI. Lastly; the public discharge of a good conscience will yield manifold advantages and great benefits to ourselves.

It will much secure and strengthen us in goodness, by the consideration that we have gained so great a victory over temptations.

It will afford us great satisfaction of mind to reflect on the consequences of such a practice.

We shall highly oblige those, whom by our endeavors or example we may convert to righteousness, or reclaim from iniquity.

We shall thereby escape the sore complaints and curses of those whom our naughty or careless demeanor might have involved in a sinful practice.

It is also no small advantage, that by a good conversation we shall procure the particular friendship and affection of good men.

Such considerations may induce all persons to observe this apostolical precept, so far as their capacities may reach: we may however, in fine, observe that it especially concerns persons of quality, in proportion to their eminency in power, authority, reputation, or any peculiar advantage, whereby the beneficial efficacy of good conversation is increased: reasons for this given, to the end.

SERMON LXV.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.

ROMANS, CHAP. XII.—VERSE 17.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

I HAVE formerly discoursed on this apostolical precept; and having declared the meaning of it, (briefly importing that we should have a special care of our external behavior, coming under the view and observation of men, that it be perfectly innocent and inculpable,) I did propose divers motives inducing to the observance of it; but divers others of great importance the time would not allow me to urge; I shall therefore now proceed to offer them to your consideration.

I did then show that a regard to the reason and nature of things, to the satisfaction of our conscience, to the honor of God, and to the credit of our religion, did require from us a good conversation before men; I now farther add, that,

I. The real interest of piety and virtue do exact such a conversation, as the most effectual way of upholding, advancing, and propagating them among men.

Example is a very powerful thing either way, both for attraction to good, and seduction to evil; such is the nature of men, that they are more apt to be guided by the practice of others than by their own reason, and more easily can write after a copy than by a rule; that they are prone to imitate whatever they see done, be it good or bad, convenient or inconvenient, profitable or hurtful, emulating the one, and aping

the other; that they love to be in the fashion, and will go anywhither in company, presuming of support, defence, and comfort therein; that they will satisfy their minds and justify their doings by any authority, deeming that laudable or allowable, or at least tolerable and excusable, for which they can allege precedents; judging that if they are not singular, they are innocent, or however not very culpable; that hardly they will undertake any thing without countenance, whereby their modesty is in some measure secured, and partners engaged to bear a share with them in the censure to which their deportment is liable. Hence a visible good conversation will have a great efficacy toward the promotion and propagation of goodness; the authority of that being adjoined to the native worth and beauty, to the rational plausibility, to the sensible benefit of virtue, will cogently draw men to it; it will be a clear pattern, whereby they shall be informed what they are obliged and what they are able to perform; it will be a notable spur, smartly exciting them to mind and pursue their duty; it will be a vigorous incentive, inflaming their courage, and provoking an emulation to do well.

The visible succor and countenance of many, espousing the cause of goodness by their practice, will assuredly bring it into request and vogue, and thence into current use and fashion; so just a cause cannot fail to prosper, having any reasonable forces to maintain it; it will have great strength, great boldness and assurance, when a considerable party doth appear engaged on its side.

Yea, sometimes even the example of a few will do it great service; the rarity giving a special lustre to their virtue, and rendering it more notable; according to that intimation of the Apostle, when he thus doth exhort the Philippians to a cheerful and forward practice of goodness; 'Do all things,' saith he, 'without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.'

A good conversation doth notify good men to one another, and draweth them together, and combineth them in a party,

for the protection of goodness, heartening and aiding one another therein.

Such advantages goodness doth always need; for it ever hath in the world many adversaries, striving by violent force to beat it down, or by treacherous fraud to supplant it; who use their authority and interest to suppress it; who by their evil example do seduce from it; who labor by detraction to blast it, by scorn and reproach to discourage it, by divers temptations and baits to entice from it; who combining their forces with the wicked spirits, and with the corrupt inclinations of men, do raise a mighty party for wickedness.

Wherefore, to balance such oppositions, goodness doth need friends to maintain it; not only friends in heart, or secret well-wishers; but open friends, who frankly will avow it, and both in word and deed will stoutly abet it.

A demure, bashful, timorous friendship, will rather prejudice than help it; for nothing will more animate its foes to assail and persecute it, than observing its friends to slink and sneak: when good men hide their faces, as if they were ashamed of their goodness, then bad men will grow more impudent and insolent in their outrages against it.

Wherefore, if we would have goodness hold up its head, we must openly take its part; if we would not be guilty of its ruin, we must stand up to uphold it; for whoever openly complieth with sin, or neglecteth his duty, may well be charged with its ruin; since if thou so desertest goodness, another after thy pattern may do the like, and a third may follow him; so the neglect of it may soon be propagated, until at length it may be quite abandoned, and left destitute of support: if it doth not thus happen, it will as to thee be accidental, and no thanks to thee for its better fortune.

The declension of piety is not perhaps more to be ascribed to any other cause than to this, than that men who approve goodness in their hearts are so backward to show it in their practice; that good men do so affect retirement and wrapping up their virtue in obscurity; that most men think it enough if in the cause of religion against profaneness and dissoluteness they appear neuters, and do not impugn it: for if in a time of infection

all sound men do shut up themselves, and all sick men walk abroad, how necessarily must the plague reign in the place?

II. Charity toward our neighbor demandeth from us a great care of our conversation before men.

The law of charity, which is the great law of Christianity, doth oblige us earnestly to further our neighbor's good of all kinds, especially that which is incomparably his best good, the welfare of his soul; which how can we better do, than by attracting him to the performance of his duty to God, and by withdrawing him from the commission of sin? And how can we do that without an apparently good conversation, or without plainly declaring, as occasion showeth, for virtue, both in word and deed? how can a shy reservedness conduce to that end? what will invisible thoughts or affections of heart confer thereto?

It is a precept of charity, that we should 'pursue things wherewith one may edify another:' and how can we perform that duty, without imparting our mind, and, as it were, transfusing it into others; so as by converting them from error and sin, by instilling good principles, by exciting good resolutions, to lay in them a foundation of goodness, or by cherishing and improving the same to rear a structure of virtue in them! how can we mutually edify without mutually advising virtue, exhorting to it, recommending and impressing it by our exemplary behavior?

The Apostles do enjoin that we should 'exhort one another, and edify one another;' that we should 'consider one another, to provoke (or to whet and instigate one another) to love and to good works;' the which can nowise be performed, without expressly declaring for goodness and remarkables acting in its behalf: to commend and press it by word is a part of our duty; but not all of it, nor sufficient to this purpose; especially seeing we cannot urge that with good confidence, nor shall be held serious in pleading for it, which we do not ourselves embrace in practice; for how can we expect that our reason should convince others, when it doth not appear really to have persuaded ourselves, when our doings evidently do argue the weakness of our discourse?

Words hardly will ever move without practice, although

practice sometimes will persuade without words; according to that of St. Peter, 'Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear,' (or due reverence to them.)

Again; we are frequently commanded to shun 'the giving any offence,' or 'the putting a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in the way of our brother;' that is, to do any thing, which anywise may confer to his incurring any sin: the which precepts are violated not only by positive and active influence, by proposing erroneous doctrine, evil advice, fraudulent enticements to sin, or discouragements from duty; but also by withholding the means serving to prevent his transgression; such as a tacit indulgence or connivance, when good admonition may reclaim him; the omission of good example, when it is seasonable, and probably may prove efficacious: for these neglects have a moral causality, inducing or encouraging the commission of sin; our silence, our forbearing to act, our declining fair opportunities to guide him into the right way will be taken for signs of approbation and consent; and consequently as arguments to justify or to excuse bad practice, in proportion to the authority and esteem we have; which ever will be some in this case, when they favor the infirmity of men.

Charity doth farther oblige us, on just cause, and in due season, to check and reprove our neighbor misdemeaning himself; for, 'Warn the disorderly,' saith the Apostle; and, 'Have no fellowship,' saith he, 'with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;' and, 'Thou shalt not,' saith the law, 'hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin on him:' where forbearance of reproof is implied to show not only a defect of charity, but hatred of our brother; and a good reason is intimated for it, because in so doing we suffer sin to lie on him; not hindering his progress in it, not endeavoring his conversion from it: but reproof is an overt act; involving somewhat of openness and plain freedom, such as the wise man doth prefer before close good-will; for, 'Open rebuke,' saith he, 'is better than secret love.'

We are all thus far 'the keepers of our brethren,' and it is a charge incumbent on us, by all good means to preserve them from the worst of mischiefs.

In fine, there is plainly nothing more inconsistent with true charity, than such a compliance with sin or neglect of duty in the sight of our neighbor, which is scandalous, or may prove contagious to him; for how can we love him whose chief good, whose eternal welfare we do not tender? whom we do not fear to seduce into the way of extreme misery, or do not at least care to lead into the way of happiness? whom without any check we can suffer to forfeit the best goods, and to incur the saddest calamities?

Wherefore if the love of ourselves and a sober regard to our own welfare be not sufficient to induce us, yet a charitable disposition and a concernedness for our neighbor (for our brethren, our relations, our friends) should move us to a good, innocent, virtuous, fruitful, and exemplary conversation: if we do not care to save ourselves, yet let it pity us to damn and destroy others by our negligence.

III. But if charity will not move us, yet justice, exacting from us a care of our good conversation before men, should constrain us thereto.

Exemplary and edifying conversation is a debt which we owe to the world, a good office imposed on us by the laws of common humanity.

When without our own hurt or inconvenience we can do considerable good to our neighbor, he hath a title thereto, (granted by the common Author of our nature, the absolute Lord of all we are or have,) and he may justly demand it from us; as we in like case might claim it from him, and certainly would in matters agreeable to our humor expect it: wherefore seeing good conversation not only doth not harm or incommode us, but is most beneficial to ourselves, and it exceedingly may benefit our neighbor, it is most just that we should afford it to him; it is no more than fair dealing to do it; to neglect it is a real injury to him.

To set ill example before our neighbor, or (which is in part and in effect the same) to withhold good example from him, (for not to give a good example is a bad thing, and so a bad

example; this,) I say, is plainly a great iniquity, and a wrong to him. For,

Is it not an injury to offer a cup of poison to any man, to invite him to drink it, to be his taster of it, so drawing him to take it off without suspicion or fear of deadly mischief? is it not an injury to forbear warning him thereof, or not to deter him from it, when it standeth before him, and he is ready to put it to his mouth? would not such a man in all conscionable esteem pass for a murderer of his neighbor?

Is it not a great wrong to carry any man out of his way (out of a right, easy, fair, and safe road) into mazes, thickets, and sloughs, or into intricate, foul, dangerous by-ways? Is it not wrongful, when he doth wander or err, not to reduce him thence, not to set him in the right way?

Is it not very foul dealing to bring a man to a steep precipice, and thence to leap down before him? is it not so, not to stop him, when he is on the brink, and blindly moving forward to cast himself down headlong?

If these be injurious dealings, then palpably it is far more such to yield any enticements or encouragements, yea not to put obstructions, if we are able, to our neighbor's incurring sin, which to his soul is all those things; the most baneful venom, the most woful exorbitancy, the most pernicious gulf that can be.

We by sinning do not only, as the wise man saith, 'wrong our own souls,' but we do also wrong the souls of others; drawing them or driving them, by the efficacious impulse of our example, into mischief and misery; for, 'When,' saith St. Paul, 'ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ:' he there speaketh of bad example; the which he not only affirmeth to be sinful in regard of Christ, but calleth it sinning against our brethren; and supposeth that we thereby do wound or smite their conscience; which to do is surely no less wrong to them, than if we should assault, beat, and wound their bodies; the wounds of conscience being of all most grievous, and producing most insupportable affliction; according to that of the wise man, 'The spirit of a man will bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?'

Indeed by thus hurting our neighbor, we do him a wrong, not only very great in itself, but such as may probably be irreparable, for which hardly we can ever be able to make him any restitution or compensation; for a better example scarce will reach all whom a bad example hath touched; the best example hardly will avail to undo that which a bad example hath done; if thereby we have engaged our neighbor in sin, we by no means can restore his lost innocence, or prevent his saying, 'Woe be to me, for I have sinned:' it will be very difficult to recover him into that state (that sound condition of soul) from which we did move him; it will however cost him, if not a final ruin, yet a sore repentance; the pangs whereof no compensation which we can yield will requite: the wounds which we thereby do inflict may rankle and prove incurable; they assuredly will find no easy cure; they must however either in consequence or in the correction be very painful; and they will leave an ugly scar behind them.

The injustice of this practice may also farther appear on divers special accounts.

All men esteem pity a debt which one man oweth to another, as liable to grief and misery, (the obligation whereto is written in the bowels of each man;) which pity will incline to succor the object of it in danger or distress; wherefore every man by the natural law is bound to endeavor the prevention or the rescue of another falling into mischief; according to that of St. Jude, 'Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire;' whence to draw men into sin by ill practice, or not to restrain them from it by good, is unjust, as a pitiless, hardhearted, cruel thing.

Again; all men hold flattery to be a practice very abusive, or more than simply wrongful; as with injury joining contempt and cozenage; taking advantage of a man's infirmity to work prejudice to him; it is indeed a mischievous, a pernicious, and withal a perfidious, an insidious, an ensnaring practice; for, 'A flattering mouth,' saith the wise man, 'worketh ruin;' and, 'A man that flattereth his neighbor, spreadeth a net for his feet:' but flattery is not only verbal; the worst flattery is not that whereby men sooth and gloze with their

lips, encouraging others by fictitious commendations to persist in bad courses; there is a tacit flattery, when by our connivance at sin we seem to approve it; there is a real flattery, when by our compliance with sin we recommend it to our camerades; these do not look so grossly, yet do insinuate our mind, and commonly do inveigle to sin more effectually; men being more apt to trust our deeds than our words, being more pleased in our vouching their actions by a participation in them, and running a common hazard with them, than in our straining to commend or to excuse them: whence it is, that gross flattery hath its effect chiefly on simpler folks, but this subtile flattery doth often gull and abuse persons of greatest capacity.

Again; a good conversation before men is a part of that due respect which we owe to them. There is a regard and a kind of reverence to be had toward every man; which should engage us to behave ourselves decently in his presence, signifying a consideration and esteem of his person, of his opinion, of his resentment, of his affection toward us: to do any foul or unhandsome thing is a contempt of him, a rudeness toward him, an affront put on him; whereby in effect we do slight, disparage, and reproach him; implying that we do little value his judgment, that we care not for his good-will; that we presume he hath not the sense to discern, or hath not the spirit to dislike, or must have the patience to comport with our unseemly and unsavory carriage. And if to do other unhandsome things before men is such an indignity offered to them, then it is especially such to commit sin before them, which is the most ugly, the most sordid, the most loathsome behavior that can be; there is no deformity, no turpitude in nature comparable to sin; nothing so offensive, so distasteful, so abominable to a rational sense; so that the wise man's saying is very true, taken any way, 'He that despiseth his neighbor, sinneth:' it is both a sin to contemn him, and sinning is an argument of contempt toward him; nor can we better observe St. Peter's injunction, that we 'honor all men,' than by forbearing to sin in their presence, out of respect to them. But farther,

IV. Let us consider that a good conversation before men is a public benefit, a great advantage to the world and common state of men.

It is not only a good office of charity to this or that man; but it layeth a general obligation on our country, on our age, on posterity itself; on which a fruitful life, an exemplary virtue may have notable influence.

As notorious sin is a plague to the world, throwing infection and death about it; provoking the wrath of Heaven, and thence deriving vengeance on it; so notable virtue is a general blessing, producing most wholesome and comfortable effects to mankind.

For how can one more oblige the public, than by conferring help to uphold the reputation, and to propagate the entertainment of those things, which are the main props of the world, for the sake of which it standeth, and by the means of which it is sustained; than by preserving the virtue and power of conscience, which is the band of all society, the guardian of faith and honesty, the best insurer of justice, order, and peace in the state, (that which exalteth a nation, and establisheth a kingdom;) than by producing and promoting those things which certainly will procure the favor and blessing of God on any people?

How can a man better deserve of the world, than by concurring to stop the contagion of sin, and the overspreading deluge of iniquity, together with all the lamentable mischiefs consequent on them; than by averting the fierce wrath and severe judgments of God, which a general prevalence of wickedness necessarily will bring down?

Most men pretend to be concerned even for the honor of their country; and how can we better promote that than by checking the progress of sin, which will not only be the bane, but is, as Solomon telleth us, 'the reproach of any people?'

It may possibly be, it hath really been, that the conspicuous virtue of a few men (yea sometimes of one single person) hath leavened a country, hath seasoned an age, hath imbued posterity with an admiration of goodness, and with an affection to it. ('One man,' saith St. Chrysostom,* 'inflamed with zeal may suffice to reform an intire people.') So among the Pagans one person did set up the study of morality, and worthily was styled

* Chrys. ἀνδρ. ά.

'the parent of (that most useful) philosophy;' whereby he did exceedingly benefit mankind, and did confer much toward preparing men for the reception of our heavenly philosophy.

Such our Lord designed his Apostles to be; for, 'Ye,' saith he, 'are the lights of the world, ye are the salt of the earth;' and such in effect they did prove, 'God by them,' as St. Paul saith, 'manifesting the savor of his knowlege in every place;' they not only by their heavenly doctrine, but chiefly by the lustre and influence of their holy example, converting the world from impious errors and naughty practices unto true religion and virtuous conversation; they did lead men to goodness not only by the ears, but by the eyes, seeing their excellent life, and 'walking as they had them for ensamples.'

It consequently may be, yea hath been, that the singular integrity of one, or of a few persons, displaying itself, hath appeased divine wrath, and hath staved off imminent ruin from a people. So one Noah, publicly maintaining and 'preaching righteousness,' did preserve the whole race of men from extirpation; so ten persons avowing righteousness would have kept Sodom from that rueful destruction; so one good man (notably owning God, and interposing for the concerns of piety) might have prevented that calamitous vengeance which fell on Israel; as Jeremy told before, and Ezekiel affirmed after it; 'Run ye to and fro,' saith God in Jeremy, 'through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh truth, and I will pardon it:' and, 'I sought for a man,' saith God in Ezekiel, 'among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none; therefore have I poured mine indignation on them:' there was then 'a remnant' of those who closely did serve God; and perhaps 'seven thousand' unknown persons, who had not in their hearts deserted religion; but this did not avert God's wrath, or preserve the nation from captivity; as a few openly professing and resolutely practising goodness might have done.

Now who would not be glad of being so public a friend, so general a benefactor, in performing that which doth otherwise so much become him, and so greatly behove him; yielding

him the best ornaments and highest advantages even on his private account? who would not be ambitious both to oblige his country, and to save his own soul together, by a worthy conversation?

Assuredly nothing can be devised more conducible to the effecting a reformation and amendment of the world, (and consequently to the prosperity and felicity of mankind here,) than a conspiracy of good men in a frank and brisk avowing of goodness in the face of the world.

V. A care of our conversation in the sight of men is needful for the preservation of our good name and fair repute among them.

A good name in holy Scripture is represented as a special gift and blessing of God, bestowed in recompense of piety and virtue, and preferred before other most considerable gifts and blessings concerning our external state; for, 'By humility,' saith the wise man, 'and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor;' both are the rewards of piety; but comparing them, 'A good name,' saith he, 'is rather to be chosen than great riches:' it cannot therefore be a contemptible thing, nor ought it to be neglected by us; for none of God's gifts, no reward which he proposeth, ought to be slighted.

Reason and experience also do concur in showing that a good repute is a valuable thing, not only as a fair ornament of our persons, and a commodious instrument of action toward our private welfare, as a guard of our safety and quiet, as serving to procure divers conveniences of life; but as very advantageous, very useful on moral and spiritual accounts; qualifying us with greater ease and efficacy to serve God, and to do good; for indeed it is manifest that without it we shall be uncapable of doing God or man any considerable service.

Wherefore in duty and wisdom we should be careful of preserving this jewel; the which we cannot otherwise do, than by observing this apostolical rule, of 'providing things honest in the sight of all men;' for a good conversation is the only guard and convoy of a good name: how can men conceive good opinion of us otherwise than from a view of worthy qualities and good deeds? They may charitably hope, but they cannot confidently judge well of us otherwise than on good evidence: 'Ye

shall know them by their fruits,' (that is, by apparent works, falling under human cognisance,) is the rule whereby our Saviour teacheth us to distinguish of men, and to build a right opinion concerning them. Honor is the shadow, the inseparable attendant of conspicuous virtue.

A good conversation will indeed command esteem, and irresistibly extort respect from all men.

Wise and good men heartily will approve it, and gladly will yield it due commendation; they cannot but honor it whenever they see it, as best suiting with their own judgment and with their affection.

Yea it will procure respect even from the worst men; for it is a mistake to think that bad men really do or can despise true goodness: in truth, however they may pretend or make a show to slight and scorn it, however in words they may flout and revile it, yet in their hearts they cannot but admire and reverence it; although their will may be so perverted as to set them against it, yet their reason cannot be so destroyed (or natural light so quenched in them) as to disapprove it; they do but vilely dissemble, and belie their conscience, when they make as if they did condemn or contemn it: 'As,' saith St. Chrysostom,* 'they who openly do flatter ill livers, do in their mind reprove them; so they who envy the workers of good, in their conscience will admire and approve them:' at least they will do thus in their sober mind; when with any serious application they do reflect on things; when the eye of their soul is anywise cleared from the mists of lust and passion: it is not to be heeded what they say in a fluster or ranting mood, when they are near out of their wits, and have their judgment stifled by sensual imaginations; but what they think when their mind is somewhat composed, and natural light doth shine freely in it.

Indeed such wretches really do most despise those who consort and comply with them in sinful follies; as they cannot in their hearts honor themselves, so they cannot esteem those whom they find like unto them; especially they despise those whom they observe to be so base and silly, as against their own judgment and conscience to fear their displeasure or to regard their

* Chrys. in Matt. v. 16.

censure; looking on them as vassals to their humor, and renegadoes from their own conscience.

Moreover a good conversation certainly will engage Almighty God to protect our reputation, and to confer honor on us. For he as governor of the world, the patron of goodness, the dispenser of proper rewards to all, is in a manner bound to encourage those openly who visibly do own him and take his part, who promote his glory and interest, who pay him due service and obedience, who in regard to his authority do faithfully pursue that which is right and good; he surely will see fit to repay such in the same kind, by openly acknowleging, countenancing, and honoring them: accordingly he hath tied himself to do so by his express word and promise; for, 'Them,' saith he, 'that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed:' he said it in reference to old Eli, who had neglected the duty of 'restraining his sons' from sin; which is a case very much of kin to all neglect of exemplary piety. And, 'Whosoever,' saith our Lord, 'shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God:' the which (one most comfortable, the other most terrible) sentences are to be understood, He that confesseth our Lord not merely by verbal profession, (for divers such who 'say, Lord, Lord,' he will not so much as know at the final judgment,) but in real practice; he that denieth him, not only by renouncing him with the tongue, but by disobeying him in scandalous conversation, by working iniquity, by the apostacy of bad manners.

VI. Lastly; The public discharge of a good conscience will yield manifold advantages and great benefits to ourselves; not only as good (and thence needful to our salvation and our comfort) but as public; some of which I shall touch.

Such a practice will much secure and strengthen us in goodness; for he that hath the heart with resolution and constancy to do well, notwithstanding any worldly discouragement, although he thereby doth cross the humor of the world, and incurreth the displeasure, envy, hatred, censure, and obloquy of men, he thus having exalted his virtue above the favor and fear

of the world, hath set it in a safe place, hath rendered it impregnable.

The consideration of having attained so happy and so worthy a victory over the most dangerous temptations (the victory of faith over the world) will be very comfortable; and the sufferings which (from the disfavor, enmity, and opposition of men) do attend such a practice, being a kind of martyrdom, will yield all the joys and comforts (together with the hopes and rewards) of an heroical patience.

It will afford great satisfaction of mind to reflect on the consequences of such a practice; and to consider that our resolution hath engaged or confirmed others in goodness, hath preserved them from sin, hath withdrawn them from bad courses, and saved them from perdition; that we have been instrumental to the salvation and happiness of any soul; that, beside our own sins, (which are a burden too heavy for any man well to bear,) we have not the sins of others to account for, and shall not be loaded with the guilt of those whom our neglect of duty, our compliance with sin, our stupid coldness and indifference in regard to spiritual affairs, our dissimulation or connivance at the scandalous violation of God's honor and transgression of his laws, might have encouraged in sin; that we are not liable to that reproof in the prophet, 'Ye have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way.'

We shall highly oblige those whom by our good endeavor or example we shall convert to righteousness, or reclaim from iniquity, or shall anywise stop in their career to ruin; who when they shall recover from their error, and soberly reflect on their case, (when they shall ἀνανήφειν, become again sober, getting out as it were of their drunken fit,) will heartily thank us, will bless us, will pray for us, as having laid on them a very great obligation, and done them the greatest kindness that could be; so that they will be ready to say to us, as David did to Abigail, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from shedding of blood:' this will be the consequence of plain dealing in such

cases, and that will be fulfilled which the wise man saith, 'He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue.'

We thereby shall escape the sore complaints and fell curses of those whom our naughty or careless demeanor hath involved in sinful practice; for when their conscience is awakened into a sense of their guilt, when they feel the stings of remorse, when they perceive the extreme damage and woe which they have incurred, then will they discharge their resentments of heart against those who have anywise been accessary to their fall into such a condition; then in their bitterness of soul, in the agony of their sorrow and perplexity, they will be apt to exclaim, Cursed be the day that I knew such an one, or that I did converse with him, who did betray me into this plight, who did inveigle me into temptation, who did not pluck me back from that sinful practice by which I now so deeply suffer; cursed be his base cowardice, his fond modesty, his affected wisdom, his treacherous negligence, his unconscionable indifference, his impious want of zeal for God's honor and charity for my soul, which did keep him from checking me in my bad courses and reclaiming me to my duty by wholesome reproof, by seasonable advice, by exemplary practice before me: it will surely be a great comfort to us that we have not given occasion for such complaints; but in proportion may say with St. Paul, 'I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.'

It is also no small advantage to us, that by a good conversation we shall procure the particular friendship and affection of good men; for it is that which discovereth good men to one another, which kindleth their affection toward each other, which draweth them together, and breedeth a familiarity between them, and knitteth their hearts together in a holy love; from whence they come to enjoy the faithful advice, the kind assistance, the seasonable consolations, and the hearty prayers each of other; the which great benefits are lost by concealment of ourselves, and reservedness in doing good; for how can any man know him to deserve love, whose goodness is not discernible?

Such considerations may induce all persons, of every rank

and condition, to observe this apostolical precept, so far as their capacities do reach; I shall only adjoin, that it especially doth concern persons of quality, in proportion to their eminency in dignity, power, authority, reputation, or any peculiar advantage, whereby the beneficial efficacy of good conversation is increased.

Such persons are like 'a city seated on a mountain, which cannot be hid;' the height of their station and lustre of their quality do expose them to the observation of all; and their authority doth recommend their practice to the imitation of observers.

Their example cannot fail of having a mighty influence; its light doth guide men, its weight doth sway them; it doth seem to warrant and authorise practice; inferiors would be afraid or ashamed to discost from it.

They have not the temptations which other men have to comply with sin out of fear, out of complaisance, out of design; they being to lead and give law, not to follow or receive it; they being the first movers in conversation; the fashion being regulated by them, or indeed being merely a conformity to their deportment.

They should by their innocence qualify themselves to reprove others with authority and courage.

They in gratitude to God, who hath bestowed on them such advantages, are obliged to employ them for his service.

They particularly were designed and endowed with those advantages, that by them they might countenance, might encourage, might reward, might by all means promote goodness in the world.

They accordingly are responsible for the influence their conversation hath; so that in the final account most actions of men will lie at their door, so that they shall respectively be either highly rewarded for their virtuous and good works, or severely punished for the vices and sins of mankind: the which most weighty consideration I leave by God's grace to be seriously applied by them, who are concerned therein.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXVI.

II CORINTHIANS, CHAP. VIII.—VERSE 21.

OBSERVATIONS on a set of hypocritical persons in the world, who, though inwardly well disposed, are yet loath to appear very good, and will hardly own Christian virtue in the constant and open discharge of its duties.

Their practice is very repugnant to the apostolical rule in the text, the observance of which may be farther enforced by scanning the common principles, motives, or excuses for the contrary practice, or showing their folly and baseness. They chiefly are as follow.

1. Men commonly in their visible conversation neglect their duty, or comply with sin, out of modesty; because they are ashamed of doing what may expose them to some disgrace or censure, &c.: but it is plainly a perverse and unmanly modesty, a vile shame, for a person to be ashamed of that which is his chief beauty, his best ornament and glory! If we are bashful, let us be so in regard to things which are truly shameful; let us be ashamed of sin and its turpitude, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

2. Another principle, near of kin to the former, is a fear of losing the good-will, or getting the ill-will of men. It must indeed often happen, that whoever sticks firmly to his duty will forfeit the favor of men, or provoke their censure: but to fear this is a silly, base, and sorry fear, arguing wretched meanness of spirit and pitiful cowardice: for it is putting the favor of man, which can avail nothing to our main interests, before the favor of God, on whom all our felicity depends, and

without whom we are incapable of any prosperity, security, joy, or comfort: this point enlarged on, and illustrated by quotations from holy writ.

3. Men often neglect the open practice of virtue, out of care to decline envy; for evil persons seeing others endowed with worthy qualities which they want; performing good deeds, to which by their depravity they are averse; and entitled to commendations and advantages to which they cannot aspire; look on such persons with an *evil eye*, and conceive malevolence against them, which vents itself in spiteful practices, &c. But thus to appease envy by deserting virtue, is very foolish and absurd. It is to cast away our best goods, because another would not have us to enjoy them: it is to render ourselves miserable, because another would not have us to be happy. Because my neighbor wants charity, must I forego innocence? because he does not love me, must I hate myself? Would any man on such terms part with his estate, or destroy his reputation? If we would avoid envy, we should not do it by incurring a worse evil, but should surmount and quash it by constant blameless conduct.

4. Another principle of this our bad practice is a fear of infamy and reproach, to which the strict practice of virtue is liable. Expostulation with a person who is thus diverted from his duty; on his renouncing all wisdom, abandoning his best interests, and forfeiting his happiness, to decline a squib or a flurt. Example of David.

As the commendation of vile persons is of no worth, so their reproach is less considerable; and we disparage our own judgment by heeding theirs: the folly of thus acting farther shown. Also it is the lot of good men, for probation and trial to be persecuted; and it is peculiarly commendable to suffer for being good, for the temper more than the name of Christ, for doing well more than for professing truth. Instances of our Lord, of his Apostles, and of the prophets of old, &c. More-

over, it is not only according to reason, but the command of God himself, that we regard not the censures of men, in comparison with our duty to him : Is. li. 7. 8.

5. Men often decline the public practice of duty out of affectation thereby to be deemed more honest and sincere, or to decline the suspicion of being hypocritical. As this is the most obvious and usual calumny wherewith dissolute people do charge good men, so to persons of generous disposition it is of all censures most poignant; whence oftentimes they choose rather to seem indifferent to goodness, than zealously attached to it.

But this proceeding is very unreasonable; for what can be more absurd than to be really and notoriously bad, (as whoever omitteth his duty is) to prevent a surmise of being so? How can we more gratify the enemy of our salvation than by approving ourselves in truth to be what he would falsely challenge us to be, mockers of God and traitors to our own souls? We have certainly more reason to be satisfied with the sure conscience and sense of our own integrity, than to be moved with any presumptuous assertions of wretches devoid of charity: and the testimony of God himself, *who is greater than our hearts*, may abundantly support us under such aspersions. It is surely better to be called a hypocrite by men, for doing our duty, than to be treated as a hypocrite by God, for neglecting it. Concluding observations on the two species of hypocrisy, that of pretending conscience which we want, and this of denying conscience which we have; that of seeming better than we are, and this of seeming worse than we may be: whence it may appear that the latter is in nature more vile, in tendency more dangerous, and in effect more mischievous than the former.

SERMON LXVI.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.

II CORINTHIANS, CHAP. VIII.—VERSE 21.

Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

If we observe the world, we may easily therein discern many persons, who being inwardly well disposed (standing right both in judgment and affection to goodness) are yet loath to appear very good, and hardly will own Christian virtue in the constant discharge of public duties, or in strict abstinence from sinful practices; but commonly (against the dictate of their reason, and sense of their heart) neglect the one, and comply with the other: an odd sort of hypocrites or dissemblers; who studiously conceal their better part, and counterfeit themselves worse than they are; who adore God in their hearts, and address devotions to him in their closets, but scarce will avow him in their visible profession and practice; who have a conscience, but are shy of disclosing it, or letting it take air, and walk in open light, confining it as a criminal to close restraint or obscure retirement; who gladly would be religious and staunch, if there might be no notice taken of it, but take care of being remarkable (or as it were scandalous) for it; who think fit to compromise and compound the business between God and the world, maintaining a neutrality and correspondence with both, so as privately to court the one, and publicly to close with the other.

Such practice is flatly repugnant to that rule, which otherwhere in precept, and here by his own example, the holy Apostle doth recommend to us; directing us not only 'before God,' (that is, in our heart, and in our secret retirements, which God alone doth behold,) but also 'before men,' that is, in our external and visible conversation, carefully to perform things good and laudable, eschewing whatever is bad or culpable.

Our obligation to which rule hath already been confirmed by divers other precepts in holy Scripture, concurring in the injunction of it; and its observance urged by various positive considerations of great weight and force, (declaring how necessary it is for promoting God's honor and glory, how requisite it is for maintaining the dignity of our profession, and advancing the interests of goodness, how charity and justice toward our neighbor do exact it from us, how conducible it is to the public benefit of mankind, and how advantageous in many respects to our own particular welfare;) and not insisting farther on those considerations, I shall now only enforce it by scanning the common principles, grounds, motives, pretences or excuses of the contrary practice, which I before touched, of openly deserting virtue, or declining the performance of duty before men; and by showing how very foolish and vain, how very naughty and base, how very mischievous, dangerous, and pernicious they are.

They chiefly are those which I shall immediately touch and reflect on.

1. Men commonly in their visible conversation do neglect their duty, or comply with sin out of modesty; because they are ashamed of doing that which may expose them to some disgrace or censure; because virtuous practice may raise distaste in the company, and provoke the scorn of those with whom they converse; because such a point of duty is out of request, and slighted in the world; they are 'afraid of men's faces;' their tender forehead cannot sustain derision, or endure to be flouted for being out of the mode, and wearing an uncouth garb of conscience.

But this plainly is a perverse and unmanly modesty; a fond, a vile, a shameful shame: fie on it! should any man be

ashamed of that, which is his chief beauty, his best ornament, his sole dignity and glory? should a man be ashamed of being evidently wise in his conduct, of following his reason, of consulting his true interest, of pursuing his own certain welfare and felicity? is it fit that any man should be ashamed of paying due acknowlegement, of yielding due reverence, of rendering due gratitude, of performing due service to his Creator, sovereign Lord, and great Benefactor; to whom he oweth all, on whose will he intirely dependeth, at whose absolute disposal he is? Surely these are no shameful things, but such rather wherein we ought to have the greatest confidence, which we ought to perform with the greatest assurance.

If we are bashful, let us be so in regard to things which are truly shameful; let us be ashamed of sin, that is, of our most real deformity, our turpitude, our disgrace, our wretchedness; the which indeed is the only dishonorable and despicable thing; the which did first produce shame, and did introduce it into the world, (for while innocence did abide, there was no shame,) and the which will ever carry shame along as its inseparable adherent: it would indeed become us to blush at our horrible unworthiness and detestable ingratitude toward our bountiful Lord, and most gracious Redeemer; it were proper for us to be confounded at our extreme folly and foul treachery toward ourselves, in betraying our souls to guilt, to regret, to wrath and punishment: who should be ashamed, who not, the holy psalmist hath well taught us, 'Let none that wait on thee be ashamed; let them be ashamed which transgress without cause:' and, 'Let the proud be ashamed—but let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.'

It is true modesty to be ashamed of doing unworthy and unhandsome things; but to be ashamed of doing what reason and duty require, is pitiful weakness of mind.

We do not owe so much regard to vicious and vain persons, as to be dashed out of countenance by them; we should rather by our masculine resolution and upright confidence put them to confusion.

If shame be an evil which we would avoid, the only remedy thereof we may learn from those words of the psalmist, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to thy testimonies:'

but it is a fond course to shun disgrace by doing that which alone deserveth it.

Is it not also a wild thing to seem modest toward men, while we are really so bold with God, as presumptuously to offend him, to affront him, 'to provoke him (as those in the prophet did) to his face?' for so indeed every sinner doth; and as it is the greatest inadvertency not to consider God alway present with us, so it is the height of impudence to sin in his presence, or to prefer a regard to men before the reverence due to his eye.

Is it not also great folly for declining a little present transient disgrace, to do that whereof afterward we shall be grievously and perpetually ashamed; which we shall never remember or reflect on without confusion, (according to that of the Apostle, 'What fruit had ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed?') the consequence whereof is our standing obnoxious to 'shame and everlasting contempt.'

If we be thus ashamed of God, and of our duty to him, may he not justly in recompense be ashamed of us, and disdain to own us in favor and mercy? He will surely, he hath often declared so; 'Whosoever,' saith our Lord, 'shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.'

2. Another principle, near of kin to the former, disposing men to commit sin, or waive duty in their open conversation, is fear of losing the good-will, or getting the ill-will of men.

It must often happen that whoever will be virtuous, and stick to his duty, will forfeit the favor of men, will incur their displeasure, will provoke their indignation; by crossing their humor and conceit, by implicitly slighting their opinion and condemning their practice: this is the portion and fate of strict and stiff piety; the friendship of God and the world are not well consistent; and St. Paul's rule may be converted, 'If I should please men, I should not be the servant of Christ:' hence men prizing the favor of men with the advantages of it, and dreading their anger, hatred, disdain, with the mischiefs consequent on them, are scared from their duty.

But in truth this is a silly, a base, a sorry fear, arguing wretched meanness of spirit, and pitiful cowardice. For,

Dost thou, fond wretch, fear to lose the favor of man, whose favor doth avail nothing to thy main interests, and cannot anywise considerably benefit thee, (for in no respect dost thou depend on his will and providence,) but dost not fear being deprived of God's favor, on which all thy good hangeth, wherein thy felicity consisteth, without which thou art uncapable of any prosperity, of any security, of any joy or comfort?

Dost thou fear the displeasure of man, of poor impotent man, a sorry frail 'worm,' whose 'breath is in his nostrils,' (ready to fly away in every moment,) whose anger can do thee no real harm, whose power can hardly touch thee, can nowise reach thy soul or its concerns; whilst thou dreadest not to offend the eternal Almighty God, under whose feet thou liest, ready to be crushed into nothing, or stamped down into hell at his pleasure?

Darest thou not, O heartless dastard, to do that which is in thy power easily to do, which thou art infinitely concerned to do, which on so many accounts thou art obliged to do, out of fear to cross thine equal, yea far thine inferior in this case; for he that standeth to his duty, as he hath the better cause, so he hath the greater force, and assuredly will defeat all his opposers?

Art thou, O pusillanimous slave, in regard to any creature, thy fellow-subject and servant, afraid of expressing thy loyalty to thy sovereign Lord, thy love to infinite goodness, thy gratitude to thy best friend and kindest benefactor, thy reverence toward the divine majesty, thine awe of uncontrollable power? is this a reasonable, an excusable, a tolerable fear?

Surely if ever to be driven out of heart is reproachful, if ever to be cowed doth argue infirmity and abjectness of spirit, it is in this case; when we have all the reason and obligation in the world to be most courageous and resolute, to fear no colors, to make our party good against all opposition; when we have the greatest necessity to engage us, and the greatest advantage to encourage us to hold out stoutly; the greatest necessity, seeing all that we have, our life, our salvation, our eternal weal doth lie at stake; 'for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life:' the greatest advantages, for that if we will, we are invincible, and assured of an easy

victory, seeing we take part with God, and have omnipotency on our side; so that we can say with David, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me:' 'The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?' 'the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?'

There is not indeed, to those who are under God's special protection, and confide in him, any thing in nature really formidable or terrible: it is his peculiar attribute to be the mighty and terrible One; he recommendeth himself to us as our fear, that is, the special object of it; we therefore do sacrilegiously wrong him, by fearing any other thing in such cases of competition, and when we are concerned to fear him; whence then we are prohibited to fear the greatest powers in the world; 'Fear not them which kill the body, (if God permit them,) but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.'

'Who,' saith St. Peter, 'is he that will (or that can) harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?'—wherefore 'be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,' (by a pure confidence in him.)

In such cases, we should be ready to accost the greatest potentates in terms like those of the three brave youths in Daniel; 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But (however) if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up.' And if, in imitation of so worthy an example, we should defy the wrath of the greatest kings, demanding any sinful compliance from us, how poor a thing is it to fear the displeasure of sorry companions enticing us to the like? how much more should we defy all the crew of hectorly ruffians and huffing braggadocios?

While wicked profane men are so bold and stout in impugning goodness, we should be courageous in defence of it. 'The righteous is as bold as a lion.'

The fear of God (the which is most reasonable and prudent,

and consistent with the bravest courage) should exclude the fear of men; the which is no less vain than base; the which indeed doth involve the wildest boldness, and most rash foolhardiness in the world, pushing us into the most desperate adventures that can be; while by sinning we incense the most dreadful anger, we invade the most formidable power, we incur the most horrible dangers, we run headlong into the jaws of death and hell: such a mixture there is of base cowardice and mad audacity in practices issuing from that principle.

3. Men commonly do neglect the open practice of virtue out of care to decline envy; for ill men seeing others endowed with worthy qualities, which they want; performing good deeds, from which their infirmity or pravity doth hold them averse; entitled to commendations, rewards, and advantages to which they cannot aspire, and whereby they seem to eclipse their credit, or impair their interest, or expose their unworthiness; cannot look on such persons without an evil eye, or without conceiving in their heart malevolent grudges at them, which they will be apt to vent in spiteful practices, endeavoring to supplant or blast their virtue; men are apt to envy the favorites of God, as they are of princes. Nor indeed doth any thing more powerfully incite men to hurt their neighbor than such malignity, being edged by that anguish which their sore eye doth feel; to shun which envy, and its mischievous effects, men commonly are tempted to withdraw its cause, their own virtue, that its bright lustre may not wound the sight of such neighbors.

But thus to appease envy by deserting virtue is very fond and absurd. For,

Shall I cast away my best goods, because another would not have me to enjoy them? shall I be terribly sick, to cure another's distempered fancy? shall I render myself miserable, because another doth not like to see me happy? because he doth want charity, must I forego innocence? because he doth not love me, shall I hate myself? to please him merely, without bettering him, to ease him of a wholesome smart, shall I displease God, and abuse myself?

Would he not be a silly man, who being envied because he

seemeth a favorite of his prince, would, to gratify such enviers, offend his prince? No surely, this is too fond a regard unto any man's base disposition, this is too great a gratification of an enemy's pleasure, this is too slavish a depression of a man's self: rather let him fret, let him torment himself, let him inflict a just punishment on his own uncharitable and unworthy humor; whereby perhaps he may be reduced to discern his folly and correct his fault.

Would any man on such terms part with his estate, mar his business, slur his reputation, or purposely play the fool? would any man become poor, infamous, or contemptible, because to be rich, to be prosperous, to be honorable, to be wise, are invidious things? Much less should a man on that account neglect his duty, thereby betraying his soul, discarding the love and favor of God, destroying the satisfaction of his conscience, and forfeiting his hopes of felicity: damages and mischiefs comparable to which all the envy and spite in the world can nowise bring on him.

If we would avoid envy, we should not do it by incurring a worse evil, and rendering ourselves contemptible for unworthiness; we should rather damp it by modesty, humility, and inoffensive tenor of life.

We should surmount it, and quash it by constant blameless conversation: the which will kill the envious or the envy.

An unquestionable virtue will stop the mouth of detraction, and drive envy into corners, not daring to show itself against it.

4. A common principle, from whence neglect of duty and commission of sin in visible conversation doth spring, is a fear of infamy and reproach, whereto the strict practice of virtue is liable; men not enduring to bear the odious censures, the foul imputations, the ugly characters, the scurvy epithets, and opprobrious names, wherewith the bold and spiteful enemies of goodness are wont to asperse and brand its faithful adherents.

To be deemed weak, credulous, superstitious, formal, timorous, nice, squeamish, scrupulous, straitlaced, conceited, affected, cross, surly, morose, froward, stubborn, pertinacious, proud.

To be termed a foppish simpleton, doting on speculations

and enslaved to rules; a fantastical humorist, a precise bigot, a rigid stoic, a demure sneaksby, a clownish singularist, or nonconformist to ordinary usage, a stiff opiniatre; a man of a pitiful narrow spirit, pent up within a small compass, confined by principles, fettered by laws, living in bondage to his conscience.

These and the like harsh censures, foul reproaches, and abusive scoffs, even all which invention quickened by envy, choler, rancorous spite, and aided by the malicious fiend, can suggest, wherewith the profane crew of men usually do conspire to daub and persecute those who refuse to comply with their unconscionable extravagances and impieties, men can hardly brook; and thence to shun them yield up all, cross their reason, prostitute their conscience, violate all their obligations; choosing rather to be justly reproachable for bad actions, than unjustly reproached for good.

But with such a person, who is thus diverted from his duty, let me expostulate.

Dost thou well to regard what unbridled tongues out of a wanton mind and corrupt heart do sputter and foam? Shall thy practice depend on their loose wit or licentious talk, so that thou must do nothing which they shall not be in humor to commend?

Wilt thou renounce all wisdom, abandon thy best interest, forfeit thy happiness, to decline a squib or a flurt?

Would not he be a stark fool, who would be railed or jeered out of his way in travel, out of his business in traffic, out of his estate or real interest on any occasion? and is he not evidently far more such, who will be flouted out of his duty, out of his salvation, out of any spiritual advantage? Was not the practice of David more advisable, who said, 'The proud have had me in derision; yet have I not declined from thy law?'

David, a great king, a man of singular courage and gallantry, a glorious hero; yet even him did bold and base people deride. Whom will not profane impudence assail? whom will not they attempt to deter from goodness?

Art thou so blind as not to discern whence it cometh that they disparage virtue? that is, from their extreme vanity and rashness, which move them to speak any thing without con-

sideration or discretion; from their great naughtiness and weakness, their being bewitched with pleasure and besotted with vice, which engageth them to take part so furiously with them; from their malignity and spite against that which crosseth their fond humors and exorbitant lusts; from their pride, which swelleth against those who by contrary practice dissent from their folly, and reprove their wickedness, and eclipse their repute; from their envy, which repineth at thy appearing better and happier than themselves, thy excelling them in true worth, thy enjoying that satisfaction which they want, thy attaining that blessed hope to which they cannot aspire: and seeing that their reproaches do issue from such principles, wilt thou regard them?

Are their words any slander, who being professed enemies of goodness do naturally impugn it by the readiest arms they have, a virulent and petulant tongue?

Can their dirty language, bespattering good things, alter their nature, or render that dishonorable and odious which in itself is most excellent, most amiable, most venerable, most useful and profitable?

Is it not indeed a commendation of virtue, which should encourage us the more to like it, to honor it, to embrace it, that vain, wild, dissolute persons, distempered in their minds, notoriously void of discretion, of integrity, of sobriety, do pretend to vilify and disgrace it?

As their commendation is of no worth, so their reproach is less considerable.

Dost thou not disparage thine own judgment by heeding theirs, or suffering it to be of any consideration with thee in the conduct of thy life?

Dost thou take them to be serious in this, or to speak in good earnest, when they reproach virtue, and slight the plain dictates of reason, the clear light of natural conscience, the express commands of God, the apparent concerns of their own soul? they who are sober in nothing, how can they be serious in this, why should they seem judicious in such a case?

Is it not evidently better to be slandered by giddy, lewd, ungodly wretches, who mind not what they say, nor care what they do, whose judgment therefore can signify nothing: than

really to deserve reproof, and thence certainly to incur blame, from all staid, sober, considerate, wise and virtuous persons, who judge advisedly and uprightly about things?

Is it not better to undergo their severest censure and most biting scoffs, than to be condemned of folly and baseness by thy own mind, and reviled by thy own conscience?

Is it not infinitely better to be unjustly defamed by men, than to be disreputed by God, exposed to most disgraceful condemnation at his bar, and thrown into that state of everlasting ignominy?

Is it not more tolerable to hear such language, than, having violated our duty and broken God's commands, one day to hear that dismal sentence, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire?'

It is a glorious infamy which one sustaineth for the sake of righteousness.

Even heathens, with whom glory was the most ample reward and sweetest fruit of virtue, yet do enjoin that we should prefer conscience before it; and that we should rather gladly embrace infamy than forsake virtue.

It is the lot of all good men (for probation, exercise, and improvement of their virtue) to be persecuted, at least in some times, as when St. Paul said, 'All that will live godlily in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution:' and surely he that sincerely loveth God would even desire occasion of suffering somewhat for his sake, in testimony of his faithful affection: but what more tolerable persecution, what more easy martyrdom could we wish, than to be lashed by a scurrilous tongue; or rather to observe the ears of others to be infested with the buzzes of detraction? what is this but a little air stirred in vain, but a mere sound or blast of wind, importing nought to him that doth not mind it, or will not be affected with it? the which surely to a sound heart and pure conscience cannot be very sensible; a man must have a froward temper, or a tender ear, whom a little such creaking or grating noise doth much vex; all its force is broken, all its mischief is remedied easily, by neglect or contempt.

It is in a manner more commendable to suffer for being good, than for being a Christian; a truer martyrdom to suffer for the

temper, than for the name of Christ; for doing well, than for professing truth.

Who indeed had ever been good, in any notable degree, if some had minded the opinion or the discourse of such men, whom in all times the great adversary of goodness and maligner of our welfare hath excited to deter men from virtue by thus abusing it? hath it not ever been the portion of good men to suffer in this kind?

Was not our Lord himself, were not his Apostles, were not all the prophets of old, were not all the heroes in goodness of all times thus pursued with obloquy? what vile imputation, what name of reproach can be devised, wherewith the spiteful world did not besmear them?

Yet were they much disturbed at it? were they anywise discouraged or scared by it from their duty? No; they rather did find satisfaction and delight in it; it rather did heighten their mind and strengthen their resolution; it begat a gallant and triumphant disdain of such injuries, enlivening and animating them in their career of duty; they did embrace reproach for righteousness not only with content, as their proper lot and portion from God's providence, but with joy, as their special glory and happiness from divine goodness; feeling it most true what our Master taught: 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.' 'Blessed are ye, when men shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.' And, according to St. Peter, εἰ ὀνειδίζεσθε, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, (that is for conscionably discharging any Christian duty,) happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.'

In fine, it is all reason, and it is the express command of God, that in such cases we should not regard the censures or the reproaches of any mortal; it is a part of duty to despise obloquy, to expose and lose reputation for God's sake. For, 'Hearken,' saith he, 'unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them

like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.'

5. Men commonly decline the public practice of duty out of affectation thereby to be deemed more honest and sincere, or to decline the suspicion of being hypocritical.

As this is the most obvious and usual calumny wherewith dissolute people do charge good men; so to men of generous disposition it is of all censures most poignant, as most crossing their temper; according to which as they hate to be, so they can hardly endure to be counted or called dissemblers; whence often they choose rather to seem indifferent to goodness, than zealously affected to it; they rather waive some points of duty, than, for the performance of them, expose themselves to that imputation.

But this proceeding is very unreasonable. For,

What can be more absurd than to be really and notoriously bad, (as whoever omitteth his duty is,) to prevent a surmise of being such? or to be truly worse than we should be, that we may not be deemed worse than we seem?

How can we more gratify the enemy of our salvation, than by approving ourselves in truth to be what he would falsely challenge us to be, mockers of God, and traitors to our own soul?

Is it not a vain thing to regard that kind of censure which it is impossible for any man to escape, on other terms than of being very naughty? for wicked men will never fail to load those with this charge, who will not comply with their follies, and 'run with them to the same excess of riot,' or are anywise better than themselves; it is inevitable for a staunch man not to be stigmatised for a hypocrite by them.

We have certainly more reason to be satisfied with the sure conscience and sense of our own integrity, than to be moved with the presumptuous assertions of any wretch devoid of justice or charity: his censure, being plainly injurious and contrary to all rules of equity, which prescribe that no man should judge of things unknown or uncertain, is utterly despicable.

The testimony of God, ('who is greater than our hearts,') perfectly knowing our sincerity, may abundantly support us;

it is a great wrong to him for us to value the rash suspicions of men, when we are secure of his knowlege, who 'seeth all our works, and trieth our hearts;' who hath said, that 'if we commit our way to him,' and 'trust in him, he will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday.'

It is certainly better to be called hypocrite by men for doing our duty, than to be treated as a hypocrite by God for neglecting it; for all those who on any account do violate God's laws, shall 'have their portion with the hypocrites,' in that disconsolate place, 'where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.' And good reason; for indeed by thus avoiding hypocrisy, we really do incur it; by seeking to preserve an opinion of sincerity, we forfeit the reality of it; by the practice of disavowing the fear of God and care of goodness, we do constitute ourselves certain hypocrites and impostors; dissembling our thoughts, smothering our conscience, deluding our neighbors with false conceits of us, feigning that indifference which we have not, pretending to act without regret or remorse, which we cannot do; seeming otherwise than we are, signifying otherwise than we mean, doing otherwise than we judge fit, or like to do; that is, if we be not stark infidels, or utterly void of conscience.

This is hypocrisy turned the wrong side outward, disguising a man in a fouler shape, and uglier garb, than that which is natural and true.

And if we compare the two hypocrisies, (that of pretending conscience which we want, and this of denying conscience which we have; that of seeming better than we are, this of seeming worse than we may be,) this in nature may well seem more vile, in tendency more dangerous, in effect more mischievous than the other.

There is in both the same falsehood, the same prevarication, the like contempt and abuse of God; but the hypocrite of whom we speak doeth worse things, more directly wrongful to God, more prejudicial to goodness, more harmful to the world.

The specious hypocrite, counterfeiting goodness, and 'having a form of godliness, without the power' and reality of it, doth

yield to God some part (the exterior part) of his due honor and respect; but the sneaking hypocrite, disowning goodness, doth apparently desert, slight, and affront God: the one serveth God with his face and his voice, though 'his heart be far from him;' the other doth not so much as sacrifice a carcase of obedience to him: that may bring some credit and advantage to goodness, strengthen its interest by his vote and countenance; this by not avowing it doth assuredly weaken its reputation and cause: that hypocrisy, as such, is a private and single evil, whereby a man doth indeed prejudice himself, but doth not injure his neighbor, yea, may edify him by the appearing (which in this respect is the same with the real) goodness of his example; but this hypocrisy is a general mischief, a scandalous evil, a contagious pestilence, whereby a man not only harmeth himself, but wrongeth many others, seducing them into dissoluteness, infecting the world with base indifference to good, and easiness to comply with sin.

It is indeed a sad thing that God and goodness should be deserted on this account: that most men should be so uncharitable, so unjust, so imprudent, as to suspect all good men of hypocrisy; as if it were incredible that any man should heartily love or fear God, (when it is rather strange that any man should do otherwise;) that any man in good earnest, or otherwise than in pretence and for sinister respects, should embrace virtue, (when it is marvellous that a reasonable man should decline it:) that so many, of themselves inclinable to goodness, should be so weak as to be deterred from it by so vain an apprehension; and that the name of hypocrisy should drive away piety; that it should become desirable that hypocrites might abound in the world, lest religion both in truth and show should be discarded.

In fine, we may otherwise suppress this odious imputation than by deserting goodness; we may demonstrate ourselves serious and sincere by an inflexible adherence to it in the continual tenor of our practice; and especially in some instances of duty, which are hardly consistent with hypocrisy: for no man can hold long in a strained posture; no man will take much pains, or encounter great difficulties, or sustain grievous hardships and afflictions, cross his appetites, forego gains and honors, for

that which he doth not heartily like and love: he may counterfeit in ceremonies and formalities, but he will hardly feign humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, temperance, at least uniformly and constantly. Even the patient induring this censure will confute it, and wipe off the aspersion of hypocrisy.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXVII.

II CORINTHIANS, CHAP. VIII.—VERSE 21.

6. ANOTHER great impediment of good conversation before men is a desire of seeming courteous and civil. Men usually conform to sinful practices, because they would not be rude and give offence to their company; and this is an ordinary snare to easy and ingenuous natures: but the ground of it is very unreasonable; for it is better to be uncivil than ungodly; it is far better manners to offend any number of men, than to be rude to God: our own interest in such a case is too considerable to be sacrificed to the conceit or pleasure of any persons. Moreover it is the truest civility (implying real humanity and kindness) to stand off in such cases, and by modestly refusing to concur in sin with our companions, to check and warn them: nay, sometimes to repel, and even to reprove them is the greatest favor we can show them.

7. Another snare which catches and holds us in the open practice of sin, or neglect of duty, is deference to the authority, custom, or example of others. A man is prone to suspect his own judgment, when it thwarts the opinion of so many, and can hardly have the heart to oppose them. Yet wise men have ever been apt to suspect that as bad, which is most commonly admired and affected. All ages have deplored the paucity of good men; wherefore popular use and practice is no good argument of truth or right. God never allowed the people to exempt themselves or us from their loyalty or obedience to his laws; but by express prohibitions hath obviated all such

pretences and pleas. Indeed it is an aggravation of sin, that we therein conspire with others, and the more the worse: reasons for this given: examples of God's vengeance on guilty multitudes. We should therefore, in such a case, be more careful of our conversation, more shy of sinful compliance with others, for the preventing of public calamity. Instances given where God for the sake of a few righteous persons has been willing to remit his vengeance. Wherefore consideration, not only of our own welfare, but of the public good, should influence our conduct. If we sin with all, we must suffer with all; nor will much company in suffering yield us any true comfort under it; yea, rather it will augment our pain.

8. Another principle, near of kin to the former, is a dislike of singularity and solitude; together with the consequences and imputations usually cleaving thereto. But this is a vain principle; for really to be singular is no fault, to be held so is no disgrace; it is rather in many cases laudable and honorable; and if in any, most reasonably is it in this. Instances given of men of singular eminence in various arts: and why should it be a reproach to be singular in the noblest of all faculties, that of living well? It were indeed desirable that virtue were more common; but surely its being rare renders it more admirable and glorious. Heroical virtue is therefore such because so few attain to it: it has been the observation and complaint of all times, *rari quippe boni*. Hence the most renowned men for goodness, and who have been recommended to us as patterns thereof, have been very singular in it; and their singularity did much enhance the price of their goodness. Many instances given of the ancient patriarchs and prophets; of our Lord and his disciples. It can therefore be no just blame or reasonable discouragement to appear singular in the practice of virtue; nor is it any argument of conceit,

humor, or pride, to follow the dictates of the best reason, the advice and example of the best men, and the direction of infinite wisdom.

9. Of affinity with the foregoing principles is this plausible apology for smothering our conscience, viz. a prudential apprehension that we shall not come off well in openly avowing and abetting goodness, so as to do it any service, but shall thereby rather work prejudice and hurt to it. The age (such a wise man will say) is so degenerate and bold, that to appear strictly good is a kind of scandal, to patronise duty is to provoke scorn and obloquy, to mention religion is to profane it, &c. In such a case is it not seasonable to observe our Lord's advice, *not to give that which is holy unto dogs, nor to cast our pearls before swine?*

But if this case be rightly weighed, it may rather strongly engage us to the open profession and practice of the strictest virtue, than excuse us from it. Advice of St. Paul on this head. The worse the world is, the more need is there of good patterns to instruct and guide it, to admonish and excite it to goodness: this topic fully dilated on.

Another principle of dispensing with conscience in public duties and conversation, is a kind of perverse wisdom, or subtle craft, affecting the name of discretion. Men see that there are divers inconveniences attending the profession of respect to God and conscience in all their doings; that the world may dislike them for it, and divers persons reproach and persecute them; that they may be crossed thereby in their designs and interests, &c. They therefore deem it advisable to decline it in open view, making up the defect by adoring and serving God in private. They would hold fair with both sides; so that neither the world should persecute them for crossing its humors, nor God punish them for transgressing his will. This they would believe to be a point of special wisdom, prescribed

by Solomon: *Be not righteous overmuch,* &c. Eccles. vii. 16. 17. This topic enlarged on.

But if this be prudence, *then*, as St. Paul saith, *is the offence of the cross ceased:* then our Lord prescribed foolish conditions: then were the Apostles very imprudent, who deserted all, and suffered so much for conscience sake. Conclusion.

SERMON LXVII.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.

II CORINTHIANS, CHAP. VIII.—VERSE 21.

Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

6. ANOTHER great impediment of good conversation before men is a desire of seeming courteous and civil. Men usually conform to sinful practices, because they would not be held clowns, rude and distasteful in conversation; they would not give offence to their company by clashing with their humor; by preferring their own judgment, and seeming to be in their own conceit wiser and better than those with whom they converse; by provoking them to think they are held fools or worse, by such non-compliance.

This is an ordinary snare to easy and ingenuous natures; but the ground of it is very unreasonable: for although in matters of indifference, where duty and sin do not fall into consideration, to be limber and ductile as can be, (which is the temper of the best metal,) to have no humor of our own, or to resign up all our humor to the will of our company, to condescend unto, and comport with any thing; to raise no faction or debate, but presently to yield to the swaying vote; to 'become all things to all men' in a ready complaisance, be wisdom and good manners, doth argue good nature, good understanding, good breeding; is a rightly gentle and obliging quality:

Yet where duty is concerned, where sinning or not sinning is

the case, there courtesy hath no room : there it is vain to pretend any engagement to complaisance.

For surely it is better to be held uncivil than to be ungodly ; it is far better manners to offend any number of men, than to be rude with God, to clash with his pleasure, to offer indignity and injury to him : there can be no competition in the case ; no shadow of reason why we should displease God to please men.

As it were more civil to offend ten thousand boors (peasants) than to affront our king ; so to offend ten thousand kings than to affront our God were in policy more advisable, and in equity more justifiable : so the royal psalmist did judge ; for, ' Princes,' said he, ' did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes :' so Moses, so Samuel, so Elias, so Jeremy, so Daniel, so the three noble children, so the holy Apostles did conceive ; who being persons otherwise very courteous and gentle, yet had not that consideration of mighty princes, as not rather to approve their consciences to God, than to comply with their pleasure ; how much less should we, on pretence of courtesy toward inferior persons in ordinary conversation, transgress our duty ?

Our own interest in such cases is too considerable to be sacrificed to the conceit or pleasure of any men : our salvation is no matter, wherein formality of respect should intervene, or have any weight ; to gain or forfeit our eternal happiness is no business of compliment or ceremony : it were a silly courtesy for a man to wait on his company to hell, a wild point of gallantry to be damned in complaisance.

Who would take himself to be obliged in good manners to hold on the round in a cup of poison : to leap down after those, who, from blind inadvertency, or wilful perverseness, tumble into a gulf, to gash or stab himself in conformity to some desperate folk ? Much less can a man be engaged out of any such regard (in compliance with the mistake, weakness, or pravity of others) to incur guilt, to provoke divine wrath, to expose his soul to utter ruin, to undergo a damage, for which all the world cannot make any reparation or amends ?

Is it not far better to disgust than to gratify those, who have so little consideration of our welfare ; who indeed are very

discourteous and heinously rude in offering to tempt us unto sin, to desire a compliance therein with them; to expect from us that we should adventure so much for their vain satisfaction?

Indeed to gratify such persons were great and noble courtesy: but really to do it, we should not go this way; for this is a spurious courtesy, rather conspiracy and treachery than courtesy.

It is in truth, at the bottom, great discourtesy (involving much unkindness, real abuse, unmerciful inhumanity and cruelty) to second, to countenance, to support or encourage any man in doing that which manifestly tendeth unto his great prejudice, to his utter bane.

It is the truest civility (implying real humanity, genuine charity, faithful kindness, and tender pity) to stand off in such cases, and, by refusing (in a modest, gentle, discreet manner refusing) to concur in sin with our friends and companions, to check them, to warn them, to endeavor their amendment and retreat from pernicious courses; to exercise that compassion toward them, which St. Jude calleth 'pulling them out of the fire.'

In such cases to repel them, yea to reprove them, is the greatest favor we can show them; it is not only safe for ourselves, but kind to them to observe St. Paul's precept, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;' for which deportment, whenever they come to themselves, and soberly reflect on things, they will thank and bless us; and it will happen as the wise man saith, 'He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with his tongue.'

In fine, if we thoroughly scan the business, we shall find that commonly it is not abundance of courtesy, but a defect of charity, or of conscience, or of courage, which disposeth us to reservedness, or to concurrence on such occasions, in regard to unallowable practices.

7. Another snare which catcheth and holdeth us in open practice of sin, or neglect of duty, is deference to the opinion, authority, custom, or example of others; to the common opinion, to the authority of great and leading persons, to the fashion of the world, and prevalent humor of the age.

A man (not consulting or not confiding in his own reason) is apt to credit the vogue, to defer a kind of veneration to the general sentiments of men, (especially of men qualified,) apprehending that allowable or tolerable, which men commonly by their practice seem to approve. He is prone to suspect his own judgment of mistake, when it doth thwart the opinion of so many; and hardly can have the heart to oppose his single apprehension against so common notions.

The commonness of sin, and multitude of offenders, doth in a manner authorise and warrant it, doth at least seem to excuse and extenuate it.

A man easily conceiteth himself safe enough, while he is in the herd, while he walketh in the road, when he hath the broad coverlet of general usage to shroud him from blame; he doth at least fancy consolation in undergoing a doom with so many.

But on many accounts, this is a very fallacious and dangerous ground of practice.

For multitudes are no good authors of opinion, or guides of practice.

Wise men have ever been apt to suspect that to be bad which is most commonly admired and affected.

Nothing is more vulgarly noted, than the injudiciousness, the blindness, the levity, temerity, and giddiness of the vulgar; temper, inclination, appetite, interest, and the like perverting biases, have most sway on them; any specious appearance, any slight motive, any light rumor doth serve to persuade them any thing, to drive them any whither.

All ages have deplored the paucity of wise and good men; the genuine disciples of our Lord, and 'sons of wisdom' have ever been *pusillus grex*, a small stock; our Lord hath told us, that 'Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.'

Wherefore popular use is no good argument of truth or right; nor can yield any warrant or any color for infringing God's law: no *plebiscitum* can be of force against it.

God never did allow the people to exempt themselves or us from their loyalty, or obedience to his laws; they are univer-

sally obligatory; he hath 'commanded all men to repent;' he hath threatened that otherwise 'all shall perish;' and that 'tribulation and anguish shall be on every soul of man that doeth evil.'

He by express prohibitions hath obviated all such pretences and pleas; 'Thou shalt not,' saith he, 'follow a multitude to do evil;' and, 'Say ye not a confederacy—neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid,' (fear not to dissent and discost from the way of this people.) And, 'If sinners entice thee, (how many soever they be, though it be a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers,) consent thou not.'

Indeed if we consider it, it is so far from excusing sin, that it is an aggravation thereof, that we therein conspire with others, and the more the worse: to oppose God singly is not quite so criminal, as to join with a rout in hostility and rebellion against him; for hereby God's authority is more shaken, and his honor more rudely violated; hereby we do not only sin ourselves, but contribute to the sin of others, encourage them to it, and uphold them in it by our patronage.

Hereby we become accessary to the degeneracy and general apostacy of the age.

Hereby we do join our forces to pull down God's judgments on our country, and by promoting general corruption induce general vengeance.

The multitude of sinners is so far from sheltering any one from wrath, that it surely draweth it on all; forcing the Almighty not only for the assertion of his own authority, and vindication of his honor, but for the good of the people, and purgation of the world, to pour forth remarkable vengeance.

For example; in the time of Noah did God 'spare the old world,' when 'all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth,' did that stave off God's wrath, or stop the deluge? No, it did grievously provoke him, it did in a manner necessitate him 'to destroy man from the face of the earth; bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.'

Did the number of sinners in Sodom prevent vengeance on them? was it not that which did condemn them to an overthrow so dismal, pulling down fire and brimstone on them?

What was the reason of that woful captivity, into which

Israel was carried? was it not because they 'were all grievous revolters;' and had so generally conspired in wickedness, that the prophet could say, 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it?' Was it not this, which did wring from God that sentence, 'Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?'

When the case is such in any community, as it was in Israel, when God said, 'From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it,' then judgment is necessary, and it must assuredly follow, 'Your country is desolate'—then God, his patience being tired, and his goodness unsupportably abused, will cry out, 'Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.'

God, as Governor of the world in discharge of his office, for clearing his honor, for assuring his majesty, out of regard to public good, for the safety and welfare of his subjects, is concerned to chastise notorious, scandalous, and infectious sin: he may reserve private sins for the final doom, when 'the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the counsels of hearts manifested,' and all things shall receive just reward and recompense; but it is expedient to punish public sins publicly: they who 'declare their sin as Sodom,' with outrageous impudence, are like to find a punishment like that in a common vengeance.

We should therefore in such a case be the more careful of our conversation, more shy of sinful compliance with others, for preventing public calamity; for that our single piety and innocence (or the goodness of a few) may save our country, together with ourselves, from wrath and ruin; seeing it is the gracious method of God in regard to a few righteous men to spare the rest, to release a nation from deserved punishment; for if in Sodom had been found ten righteous persons, it had escaped that horrible destruction; and Israel in Hezekiah's time (although in a very great and general corruption of that age) by a few good men did avoid the like doom; according to that of the prophet, 'Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom.'

The righteousness of one Noah did save the race of mankind from being extinct.

The zeal of one Phinehas did stop that plague, which had devoured Israel: 'Phinehas,' saith God himself, 'the son of Eleazar, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.'

If there had been such another public patron of piety, at the time when Israel was so severely punished by deliverance into captivity, it would have obstructed that lamentable event; God himself so testified: for, 'I sought,' said he, 'for a man among them, that would make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation on them:' and, 'Run ye to and fro, (said he again,) seek if ye can find a man—in Jerusalem—and I will pardon it.'

Wherefore, beside regard to our own welfare, a consideration of public good, charity toward the world, a compassion of our country should withhold us from conspiring in common transgressions, or omissions of duty.

If we sin with all, we must suffer with all; nor will the having so much company in suffering yield any true comfort to us: *Socios habuisse doloris* (to have companions in sorrow) is in itself a pitiful solace, and an unworthy one, savoring of inhuman malignity; for our fellows will bear no share with us, or take off any thing from the burden of our pains, which will be equally to them and us extreme.

Can it be any considerable satisfaction, that we are sick of an epidemical disease, that sweepeth away multitudes about us and with us?

Is it better for one part, that the whole body is overspread with a noisome leprosy? that its fellow members are tortured with grievous anguish?

Can the sorest pains of our brethren cure the achings of our heart, assuage the pangs of our conscience, or slack the consuming flames beneath?

What advantage can we enjoy from going down to hell in a troop? what ease shall we find there from being encompassed

with the doleful groans, the piercing shrieks, and dismal howlings of fellow sufferers in that infernal dungeon?

Alas! will it not rather augment our pains to hear the sore complaints, the fierce accusations, the desperate curses of those, whom our compliance hath engaged, or encouraged, or confirmed and hardened in that wicked practice, which did throw them into that disconsolate case?

8. Another principle (near of kin to the former) is a dislike of singularity and solitude; together with the consequences and imputations usually cleaving thereto.

One would not be a man by himself; to be gazed on, to be hooted at as a kind of prodigy, to be deemed an extravagant, odd, humorous, fantastic person, conceited of his own opinion, addicted to his own way, arrogating to himself a liberty of crossing and condemning or contemning the world; therefore he runneth along with the age, complying with its sinful customs, and naughty fashions.

But this is a vain principle; for really to be singular is no fault, to be held so is no disgrace; it is rather in many cases laudable and honorable; and if in any, most reasonably it is in this.

Doth not singularity or paucity increase the price and estimation of every valuable thing? What maketh a jewel but rarity? what but that maketh a diamond more precious than a pebble?

Do not men for singular eminency in any art, skill, faculty, endowment, gain credit and renown? What recommended to posterity the names of Apelles, Praxiteles, Phidias, but excelling in their art beyond the ordinary rate? what gave to Demosthenes and Cicero their esteem, but a singular knack of eloquence? to what did Alexander and Cæsar owe their fame, but to an extraordinary valor? whence got Socrates such a name, but from his singular wisdom? whence Fabricius, Aristides, Cato, but from their singular integrity?

Why then should it be a discouragement or reproach to be singular or extraordinary in the noblest of all faculties, that of living well, in the most excellent of all perfections, that of virtue?

In truth a man is hardly capable of a greater commendation

than this, that he is singularly good; that he surpasseth the vulgar level, and mounteth near heaven in the divinest qualities; that no bad example or fashion hath been able to seduce or corrupt him: this should render him to be most highly esteemed, and most dearly cherished, as a choice ornament of the world, as a most useful instrument of good to mankind.

It were desirable that virtue were more common in the world; but surely its being more rare doth render it more admirable, more illustrious, more glorious.

Heroical virtue is therefore such, because so few do attain or can reach it;

——pauci quos æquus amavit
Jupiter;

A few, who by special assistance of God's grace, and by extraordinary resolution, do surmount the obstacles which are set against it.

It was well said of St. Bernard, 'To be good among good men hath safety, but to be such among bad men hath also praise;' (a man will be saved by that, but he should be commended for this;) 'that hath as much facility as it hath security, this is of as much worth as difficulty.'*

Indeed if we consider the nature of things, or consult the history of times, we shall find that virtue must be, and ever hath been, liable to this imputation; it is commonly so hard and hazardous to be good in any notable degree, that few will take the pains, or undergo the hardships requisite to attain or exercise it.

Hence the best men (who are such, not according to the blind conjecture of men, but in God's sure esteem) are an elect, and peculiar sort of people, a few choice persons culled out of a great lump of those, who either reject religion, or embrace it only in verbal profession or formal show.

Hence it hath been the observation, and complaint of all times,

Rari quippe boni.

Hence the most renowned men for goodness, and who by

* Bern. Ep. 25.

God's special care have been recommended to us as patterns thereof, have been very singular in it; and their singularity did much enhance the price of their goodness.

It is said of Enoch, that 'he walked with God;' but it seemeth with small or no company beside; otherwise it would not have been so particularly recorded of him.

Noah was content to be a man by himself, 'a preacher of righteousness' against the vogue, and a practiser thereof against the stream of his whole age; for 'thee (said God of him, that is, thee alone) have I seen righteous before me in this generation.' He was no less singular in his goodness, than in his salvation.

Abraham had no common qualities, which moved God to pick him out, and separate him from the rest of mankind, (to single him 'from his kindred and country') to confer special graces and blessings on him.

Lot had 'his righteous soul vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked,' which did inclose him, yet so that he did retain a sound and clear integrity among them.

Job had this testimony from God, examining Satan concerning him, 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?'

What was the resolution of Joshua? did he value being sole or singular in his practice? No; for, propounding to his people whether they would choose God or not, he told them that however it were, although all of them should forsake God, he was resolved to stick fast to him, not regarding their practice; 'But,' said he, 'as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord:' that indeed was nobly resolved; it was a resolution worthy of such an hero, to stand alone in so good and wise a choice against his whole nation. It was a resolution suitable to that his behavior, which he expressed in these words, 'My brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God;' in regard to which his comrade Caleb, being of the same spirit with him, is called a man 'of another spirit;' different from, and above the mean spirit of his fellows.

What was David? was he not a man by himself? was he not like one, of whom the poet saith,

> Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri
> Hoc monstrum puero, vel fœtæ comparo mulæ?

So he telleth us, 'I,' saith he, 'am become as it were a monster unto many, but my sure trust is in thee.'

Did Elias, to shun the imputation of singularity, or in regard to common practice, swerve from his faithful adherence to God's service, although he did passionately resent, and bewail his case? No, for 'I have,' said he, 'been very jealous for the Lord of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.'

What was the case of Jeremy? 'I,' saith he, 'was a derision to all my people, and their song all the day:' yet did he maintain his integrity, and was 'a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and a brazen wall against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, and against the people of the land.'

What was the condition of our Lord? was not he *σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον*, a prodigy spoken against by all; against whom 'both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together;' who 'trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him;' who in his life was regarded by few, and at his death (when he yielded his great attestation to truth and righteousness) was deserted by all?

What was the Apostles' condition? Were they not singular men? were they not held 'a sect, everywhere spoken against,' and impugned with all violence of spirit and rage? were not they 'made a spectacle to the world,' to be gazed at, with scorn and reproach? did not they (a few, simple, poor, weak folk) in doctrine and practice cross and control the world, confuting, reproving, condemning the generality of men, of error, of folly, of wickedness?

It can therefore be no just blame or reasonable discouragement to appear singular in the practice of virtue.

Such a singularity is no good argument of fond conceitedness, of wilful humor, of arrogant pride. For,

Can it be fond conceitedness to follow the dictates of the best reason, to observe the advices of the wisest men in all times, to follow the direction and conduct of infinite wisdom; to embrace that, which in most cases natural light, common sense, and continual experience do approve? is it not wildness to do otherwise, though all should do it?

Can it be wilful humor to hold fast our best interest, our truest comfort, our eternal salvation? is it not rather so to comply with a 'perverse generation' in running headlong to their own ruin?

Can it be pride or arrogance to acknowlege our Maker, to be loyal and dutiful to our heavenly sovereign, to fear the Almighty God, to submit to his will, to 'tremble at his word,' to 'be afraid of his judgments,' to shun his fierce anger and severe vengeance?

Is it a bad ambition to seek that honor and immortal glory which God doth offer, to shun that everlasting shame and contempt which he doth menace?

Is it not rather monstrous presumption and enormous vanity to consort and conspire with rebels against God's law, with despisers of his grace?

In fine, when the most men are foolish and vain, when the world is depraved and dissolute, it is necessary that the best reason should be called humor, and the wisest men should be deemed extravagant; that the best things should be slighted, and the best persons represented with odious characters: but hence to renounce wisdom and goodness is abominably absurd; as if we should therefore put out our light, because it is night about us, or in deep winter should put off our clothes among the wild Indians.

9. Of affinity to the foregoing principles is this most plausible apology for smothering our conscience, namely, a prudential apprehension, that we shall not come off well in openly avowing and abetting goodness, so as to do any good or service to it thereby; but shall thereby rather work prejudice and disservice to it.

The age (will such a wise man say) is incorrigibly degene-

rate; wickedness is not only bold and impudent, but even outrageously insolent; so that to appear strictly good is a kind of scandal, to pretend conscience for our rule of action is to be ridiculous, to patronise duty is to provoke scorn and obloquy, to mention religion is to prostitute and profane it, to concern God in our doing is to expose his most sacred and venerable name to irrision and foul abuse.

Such is the posture of things, that of all the sects and factions which divide the world, that of Epicurean scorners and mockers is become the most formidable; with disdainful pride insulting and vaporing over the professors of religion, persecuting all soberness of mind and staunchness of manners with a fierce rage and a kind of satanic zeal.

The state of the world being like to that when the holy psalmist cried out, 'Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? how long shall they utter and speak hard things, and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?'

In such a case, is it not seasonable to observe our Lord's advice, 'not to give that which is holy unto dogs, nor to cast our pearls before swine;' (not to expose good doctrine and holy practice to scurrilous and sensual people, who will snarl and bark at it, will scorn and trample on it, will bite and tear you for it?)

Is it not then wisdom rather fairly to retreat, withdrawing our virtue into a safe retirement, than by openly contesting for it against overmatching forces to hazard its being baffled and abused, its being trampled on and triumphed over, by scornful pride and malice?

In such a world to oppose impiety, what is it but attempting to stop a torrent, to allay a storm, to gape against an oven, to blow against the wind, to kick against the pricks?

But if this case be rightly weighed, it rather strongly may engage us to an open profession and practice of the strictest virtue, than excuse us from it.

St. Paul doth enjoin us 'to walk accurately, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time,' for this reason, 'because the days are evil;' and 'that we should be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked

and perverse nation, shining among them as lights in the world, and holding forth * the word of life.'

And great reason for it; for the worse the world is, the more there is of good patterns to instruct and guide it, to admonish and excite it to goodness.

If the days are evil, it is high time that we should apply our best endeavors to the mending of them.

If virtue be so near lost, or so quite gone from among us, it is needful that we should presently seek to recover or to retrieve it.

If goodness be so hardly pressed by opposition, then hath every good man the more reason to appear strenuously in its defence, the more are we engaged to hasten with all our might to its relief and succor from irrecoverable oppression.

Every one should labor to raise a bank against that inundation, which threateneth to overflow and overwhelm all.

Shall we endure to see the adversary of our welfare to carry all before him without any opposition or obstruction? Shall we suffer iniquity to enjoy a quiet reign, to root and settle itself in its usurpation, to raise itself a title of long occupancy and prescription against goodness?

Is it not then more generous to avow our friendship to virtue, and to abet it in our patronage, when it is under the hatches, and crieth for our aid? is it not vile treachery in such a case to desert it?

Is it not gallant then 'to resist sin,' and check wickedness, when it is so high and rampant?

Who will not be virtuous (or endeavor at least to appear such) when virtue is in fashion and request; when it flourisheth in reputation, when all the world doth countenance and abet it? who will not shun or disown wickedness, when it is commonly odious and despicable? who will not help the Lord against weak adversaries.

But to embrace virtue on greatest disadvantages, to disclaim vice in its triumphant prosperity, this is indeed brave and masculine.

He is a worthy man indeed who can keep the field among

* (Or holding fast, ἐπέχοντες.)

so many stout enemies, who can stand upright 'in a crooked generation;' who can despise the scorn, defy the rage, bear up against the impudence and malignity of vain, base, wretched men, combining to supplant and extirpate goodness.

Nor have we reason in proceeding thus to despair of good success; we need not fear thereby to expose the credit, or endanger the interest of goodness. For,

How can we fail of prospering in the maintenance of God's cause and special concern? Although men may commonly desert him, yet doth he not utterly forsake them, or give over the government of the world; he may let the reins lie a little loose, but he doth not put them out of his hands; his power cannot be abated, his providence can never sleep; though he is so patient in suffering wicked men to provoke him, yet he will not be slack in assisting good men, who take his part, and undertake to maintain his honor; assuredly he will help them, who 'help him against the mighty.'

In this service 'one will chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight;' one David will knock down never so many Philistines reproaching God's name; one Phinehas will repress the petulancy of a whole nation; one Jeremy shall be 'a brazen wall against a whole land;' God will make it good to such an one, 'They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.'

One sober man in defence of virtue is able to discomfit all the Hectors, the huffing blades, and boisterous ruffians in the world, attacking them with sound discretion and steady resolution: for all their bravery and confidence, they are easily mated; and being like their fire, if you 'resist them, they will flee from you:' a prudent, seasonable, smart check will quash their spurious courage and giddy audacity. Their contempt of goodness is but feigned; they cannot really for their hearts despise it; there is stamped on their souls and consciences such a respect, such an awe thereof, which they cannot quite rase out: wherefore if you briskly represent it to them, and challenge their reverence to it, they cannot but succumb, their own mind and conscience joining to back your reproof; so that if you cannot reclaim them, you shall however repress them; if

you cannot correct their vice, you shall yet confound their impudence; 'For so,' saith St. Peter, 'it is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men;' and, 'Having a good conscience, that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your conversation in Christ.'

It is only sneaking, or a timorous pretence to virtue, which they contemn; but they will admire those who stiffly adhere to it, and stoutly maintain it.

We shall therefore expose virtue, not by frankly avowing it, but by faintly slinking from it, when occasion requireth an open acknowlegement and exemplary practice of it.

If the world is so very bad, it will not be worse for our attempt to better it; it will be so much at least better, that one therein hath that worthy purpose.

It was bad, when Noah preached righteousness to it.

It was bad, when Elias was so zealous for the Lord of hosts.

It was bad, when Jeremy was derided for declaring God's will and exhorting to repentance.

They were very bad times, when all the prophets did strive so earnestly to reclaim men from their wickedness; being reproached and persecuted for doing so, but not deterred from doing it: the resentment they had of the badness of times did not make them abandon the means of its recovery from it.

'The whole world did lie in wickedness' when the Apostles did undertake the reformation of it.

In fine, if men generally on such accounts of despairing prudence neglect to own goodness, what must the consequence be? what, but that piety shall be cashiered, that virtue shall be discarded, that conscience shall be quite exploded and exterminated from the world? that consequently an horrible deluge of various mischiefs, a general prevalence of lewdness and luxury, of fraud and violence, of faction and tumult, a violation of all faith and friendship, a dissolution of all order and peace will ensue?

And what must grow on this state of things? what but another flood of judgments, and woful vengeance? when God's patience hath been tried to the utmost, and his goodness tired

with bearing such a load of abominations, he will be forced to cry out, 'Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?'

10. Another principle of dispensing with conscience in public duties and conversation before men, is a kind of perverse wisdom, or subtle craft, affecting the name of discretion.

Men see there are divers inconveniences attending the profession of respect to God and conscience in all their doings; that the world may dislike and disesteem them, that divers persons will hate, malign, reproach, and persecute them for it; that they may chance to be crossed in their designs, and lose profits or preferments thereby; therefore they deem it advisable to decline it in open view, making up the defect by adoring and serving God in private.

Thus they think to salve all, by maintaining a neutrality, and compounding the business, yielding an open conformity to the world, and reserving a secret regard to God; sinning publicly, and privately repenting; retaining their credit, quiet, ease, pleasure, with their conscience and peace of mind; affecting some piety, but avoiding the scandal of it.

They would hold fair with both sides; so that neither the world should persecute them for crossing its humor, nor God punish them for transgressing his will.

They drive a subtle trade, hoping to gain on all hands, both the benefits of the other, and the advantages of this world; to save their soul, and serve their worldly interests together:

This they would believe a point of special wisdom, prescribed by Solomon: 'Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise; for why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before the time?'

But this rooking trick, to hedge thus and save stakes, to play fast and loose, to dodge and shuffle with God, God doth not like, nor will suffer himself to be gulled with it.

He will not be satisfied with such a mongrel, partial, and halting service.

He will not allow us to withhold that half of his service (the external, visible part thereof) which is most honorable to him, and most beneficial to our neighbor.

He cannot endure a double heart, or a double face; one looking upward to heaven, another downward to the earth.

He exacteth from us an integrity of heart and perfection of obedience; that we should love him with our whole heart, that we should be 'perfect with him,' that we should walk uprightly, not 'deflecting to the right hand or left' from our duty.

He will not endure that we should hold amity or correspondence with his enemies; particularly with the world, the friendship whereof he hath declared inconsistent with his favor; and that it is a spiritual adultery to impart any of our affections to it; according to that of St. James; 'Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? so that whosoever will be a friend of the world becometh the enemy of God.'

We may shift as well as we can in the world, provided that we hold innocence, and do not conspire with it against God, by violation of our duty to him: 'Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves:' Matt. x. 16. ('as lambs:' Luke x. 3.)

They reproach good men as superstitious; who are afraid of invisible powers; who let go things in hand (present interests and pleasures) for a reversion and hope.

As if God's word were not sufficient security; as if we may not as well rely on things conspicuous to reason, as those which are obvious to sense.

If Christianity be plainly false, they say well; but if it be true, very absurdly; yea if probable, very imprudently; yea if possible, not wisely.

They charge conscientious men with timorousness, faintheartedness.

It is timorousness or blameable fear to dread things without reason, things nowise formidable, which cannot hurt us; such a timorous man is he, that out of fear of men, (of displeasing them, of suffering by them, of their reproach, &c.) transgresseth his duty.

But to fear God is wisdom, soberness, duty, virtue; it is handsome and honorable, becoming our nature, our condition; the passion of fear was chiefly put in us for this purpose, as its best use.

Is it courage, and not rather madness to provoke, to resist, to challenge, to cope with the Almighty? is it courage to throw one's self down a precipice, to leap into the infernal lake? is it gallantry to dare transgress all reason and sobriety? is it brave to be wild and senseless, &c.?

It is true courage to resist and repel sin assaulting a man with whatever advantages; to dare to do well, although vain men deride, and spiteful men hate us for it.

It is a kind of martyrdom to be ill used by the world for adhering to his duty; and he hath a share in that, 'Blessed are they, who suffer for righteousness.'

In fine, it is a vain prudence to be thus politic with God; whereby we shall lose the whole, or that part which is invaluable, out of presumption to save a small inconsiderable part.

If this be prudence, 'then,' as St. Paul saith, 'is the offence of the cross ceased.'

Then our Lord prescribed a foolish condition.

Then were the Apostles very imprudent, who deserted all, and suffered so much for their conscience; being content to secure their spiritual interest, and to obtain the eternal rewards of piety; 'choosing the better part, which could not be taken from them.'

What the true wisdom is in such cases St. James hath told us: 'Who is a wise man, and endued with knowlege among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXVIII.

PSALM CXLV.—VERSE 9.

THE goodness of God may seem to many persons a trite and vulgar theme; but we can neither speak too much on this most excellent subject, nor ought we ever to be weary in hearing about it; for if we are, it is a sign that the palate of our mind is distempered. Reasons given why this subject can scarcely be too much inculcated. Its encouragement of goodness and piety in our hearts; the precedent of the holy psalmist; the practice of the heavenly inhabitants.

That God, the Lord and Maker of all things, is superlatively good, the universal frame of nature, the course of providence, and the express testimonies of Holy Scripture do fully declare. There is no argument from natural effects discernible by us, which proves God's existence, without persuading us also that he is very kind and benign, careful to impart to us all befitting good, that is suitable to our natural capacity and condition, and unwilling that any considerable harm, any extreme want or pain should befal us: this topic dilated on.

The like conclusion may be inferred from the observation of divine Providence; from the general preservation of things in their natural constitution and order; the constant vicissitudes of seasons for the supply of our needs; the maintenance of such a course of things in the world, that notwithstanding the irregularity and violence of the passions in many persons, men ordinarily contrive to live in the enjoyment of competent accommodations for life; the aids and consolations arising from society; the supports and encouragements of virtue, as well as

the restraints and chastisements of vice frequently administered, &c. : this topic enlarged on.

As for Scripture, there is nothing either in way of positive assertion more frequently inculcated, or by illustrious examples more set forth, than this attribute of God : this fully displayed. Even in the most terrible and amazing instances of divine justice, we may observe particulars, more than savoring of great mercy and goodness.

1. That (in most of these cases, in all according to some account) God was not moved to the displeasure productive of those effects but on very great considerations.

2. That he did not on the first glimpses of provocation proceed to the execution of his wrath, but did with wonderful patience expect a change in the offenders, *waiting to be gracious*.

3. That the inflictions themselves, how grievous soever in appearance, were not really extreme in measure, nor so terrible as might have been inflicted.

4. That (consequently on some of these premises) the inflictions were in a sort rather necessary than voluntary in respect of him ; rather a natural fruit of men's dispositions and dealings, than a free result of his will.

5. That farther, the chastisements inflicted were wholesome and profitable, both in their nature, and according to his design.

6. That during their sufferance, God bore compassion towards them who underwent it : *he remembered they were but dust*, &c.

7. That God *in his wrath remembered mercy*, mixing gracious intentions of future refreshment and reparation with the present executions of justice.

8. Lastly, that he always signified a readiness to turn from his anger, to forgive them, and on very equal and easy terms to be fully reconciled to them.

These particulars, if we attentively consider the most dreadful examples of divine severity, may be observed, most of them in all, all of them in some, either plainly expressed, or sufficiently insinuated by the circumstances of the historical narration. Conclusion.

SERMON LXVIII.

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM CXLV.—VERSE 9.

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

THE goodness of God is a frequented theme; to many perhaps it may seem vulgar and trite; so that discourse thereon, like a story often told, may be nauseous to their ears: but in truth neither can we speak too much on this most excellent subject, nor ought we ever to be weary in hearing about it; for it is a sign that the palate of our minds is distempered, if we do not with delight and affection relish any mention of divine goodness. Yea, the observation of men's common practice would induce us to think that either this point is not so well known, or but little believed, or at least not well considered and applied. For how could we be so void of love to God, of gratitude toward him, of faith and hope in him, were we thoroughly persuaded, did we seriously consider, that he is so exceedingly good toward us? How can we be so insensible of the benefits we enjoy, so distrustful of finding succors and supplies in our need, so dissatisfied and discontented with what befals us, if we conceive and weigh that all things do proceed from, are guided and governed by immense goodness! How also, if men have such an opinion of God impressed on their minds, comes it to pass that they are so little careful to resemble and imitate him in kindness, bounty, and mercy to one another? How is it, in fine, that the most powerful argument to

all manner of good practice, and the mightiest aggravation of sin, if well known and pondered, hath so little force and efficacy on us? From experience therefore this argument may seem scarce sufficiently inculcated. We may add that discourse on this attribute (which above all other attributes doth render God peculiarly admirable and amiable) hath this special advantage beyond other discourses, that it doth, if our hearts conspire therewith, approach most nearly to the formal exercise of the most high and heavenly parts of devotion, praise and thanksgiving; that it more immediately conduces to the breeding, the nourishing, the augmenting in us the best and noblest of pious affections, love and reverence to God; trust and hope in him; willing resolutions to please and serve him; whence it is consequent that we cannot too much employ our thoughts, our words, or our attention on this point. Besides so much reason, we have also good example to countenance us in so doing: we have the precedent of the holy psalmist, resolving to make it his constant and continual employment: 'I will sing,' saith he, 'of the mercies of the Lord; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.' And, 'Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever;' (that blessing and praising God, the context shows to have consisted especially in the declaration of God's great goodness:) and, 'It is a good thing,' saith he again, 'to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most High: to show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.' Such were his intentions, and such his judgment about this practice; and we find him in effect true and answerable to them; every song of his, every meditation, every exercise of devotion chiefly harping on this string; and he earnestly wishes that others would consent and consort with him therein: he earnestly exhorts and excites them thereto: 'O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!' 'Praise the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.' That one example might sufficiently authorise this practice; but we have innumerable others, and those the highest that can be, to encourage and engage us thereto: even the whole choir of heaven, whose

perpetual business and happy entertainment it is to contemplate with their minds, to celebrate with their voices, the immense goodness of God; 'They have,' as it is in the Revelation, 'no rest day or night from performing this office.' Such is the subject of our discourse, the which our text most plainly and fully expresses; asserting not only the goodness of God, but the universal and boundless extent thereof; 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies (or his bowels of affection and pity) are over all his works.' And that God indeed is such, we shall first endeavor to declare, then shall briefly apply the consideration thereof to practice.

That God the Lord, and Maker of all things, is of himself, in regard to all his creatures, especially to us men, superlatively good, that is, disposed never without just or necessary cause to harm us, and inclinable to do us all possible and befitting good, the universal frame of nature and the constant course of Providence do afford us sufficient reason to conceive, and most frequent, most express testimonies of holy Scripture do more fully demonstrate. There is no argument from natural effects discernible by us, which proveth God's existence, (and innumerable such there are, every sort of things well studied may afford some,) the which doth not together persuade God to be very kind and benign; careful to impart to us all befitting good, suitable to our natural capacity and condition; and unwilling that any considerable harm, any extreme want or pain should befal us. (I interpose such limitations, for that an absolute, or universal and perpetual exemption from all kinds or all degrees of inconvenience, an accumulation of all sorts of appearing good on us, doth not become or suit our natural state of being, or our rank in perfection among creatures; neither, all things being duly stated and computed, will it turn to best account for us.) The best (no less convincing than obvious) argument, asserting the evidence of a Deity, are deduced from the manifold and manifest footsteps of admirable wisdom, skill, and design apparent in the general order, and in the particular frame of creatures; the beautiful harmony of the whole, and the artificial contrivance of each part of the world; the which it is hardly possible that any unprejudiced and undistempered mind should conceive to proceed from blind chance, or as blind

necessity. But with this wisdom are always complicated no less evident marks of goodness. We cannot in all that vast bulk of the creation, and numberless variety of things, discover any piece of mere pomp or dry curiosity; every thing seems to have some beneficial tendency; according to which it confers somewhat to the need, convenience, or comfort of those principal creatures, which are endued with sense and capacity to enjoy them. Most of them have a palpable relation to the benefit (to the subsistence or delight) of living creatures: and especially in an ultimate relation to the benefit of man: and the rest, although their immediate use be not to our dim sight so discernible, may therefore be reasonably presumed in their natural designation to regard the same end. Wherefore as on consideration of that ample provision which is made in nature for the necessary sustenance, defence, and relief, for the convenience, delight, and satisfaction of every creature, any man, who is not careless or stupid, may be induced to cry out with the psalmist, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all:' so may he with no less reason and ground after him pronounce and acknowlege; 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord:' 'The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy:' 'Thy mercy is great unto the heavens:' 'Thy mercy is great above the heavens.' It is indeed because divine goodness is freely diffusive and communicative of itself; because essential love is active and fruitful in beneficence; because highest excellency is void of all envy, selfishness, and tenacity, that the world was produced such as it was; those perfections being intrinsical to God's nature, disposed him to bestow so much of being, of beauty, of pleasure on his creatures. 'He openeth his hand, they are filled with good:' it is from God's open hand, his unconfined bounty and liberality, that all creatures do receive all that good which fills them, which satisfies their needs, and satiates their desires. Every pleasant object we view, every sweet and savory morsel we taste, every fragrancy we smell, every harmony we hear: the wholesome, the cheering, the useful, yea, the innocent and inoffensive qualities of every thing we do use and enjoy, are so many perspicuous arguments of divine goodness; we may not only by our reason collect it, but we even touch and feel it with all our senses.

The like conclusion may be inferred from the observation of divine Providence. Every signification, or experiment, whence we may reasonably infer that divine power and wisdom do concur in upholding, managing, and directing the general state of things, or the particular affairs of men, being well examined and weighed, would afford reason apt to persuade, that the Governor of the world is graciously affected toward his creatures and subjects. The general preservation of things in their natural constitution and order; the dispensing constant vicissitudes of season, so as may serve for the supply of our needs; the maintaining such a course of things in the world, that, notwithstanding the great irregularity of will, and violence of passion in so many persons; yet men do ordinarily shift so as to live tolerably on earth in peace and safety, and enjoyment of competent accommodations for life; with the aids and consolations arising from mutual society; the supports, encouragements, and rewards of virtue many times in a strange manner administered; the restraints, disappointments, and seasonable chastisements of wickedness, especially when it grows exorbitant and outrageous, unexpectedly intervening, with the like passages of providence, will, to him that shall 'regard the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands,' sufficiently declare as the other glorious attributes, (wisdom, power, and justice,) so especially the goodness of him, who presides over the world; assuring that he is a friend to the welfare, and dislikes the misery of mankind. He that shall well observe and consider how among so many fierce and hardhearted, so many crafty and spiteful, so many domineering and devouring spirits, the poor and weak, the simple and harmless sort of people do however subsist, and enjoy somewhat, cannot but suspect that an undiscernible hand, full of pity and bounty, doth often convey the necessary supports of life to them, doth often divert imminent mischiefs from them; cannot but acknowlege it credible, what the holy Scripture teacheth, that God is the friend, and patron, and protector of those needy and helpless people, 'redeeming their soul from deceit and violence,' as the psalmist speaks; that he is, as the prophet expresseth it, 'a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is

as a storm against the wall.' He that shall remark how frequently, in an unaccountable way, succor and relief do spring up to just and innocent persons; so that in a whole age, as the psalmist observed, such persons do not appear destitute or forsaken; how also iniquity is commonly stopped in its full career, and then easily receives a check, when its violence seemed uncontrollable; how likewise many times the world is rescued from confusions and distractions unextricable by any visible wit or force; with other like occurrences in human affairs; must admit it for a reasonable hypothesis (fit to render a cause of such appearances) that a transcendent goodness doth secretly interpose, furthering the production of such effects: he must on such observation be ready to verify that of the psalmist: 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth the earth.' St. Paul instructs us that in past times (that is, in all generations from the beginning of things) God did attest himself to be the governor of the world: How? ἀγαθοποιῶν, by his beneficence; 'giving to men showers from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness:' competent evidences, it seems, these were of his providence, and withal (supposing that) certain demonstrations of his goodness: although some have abused this kind of testimony, or argumentation, so valid in itself, unto a contrary purpose; alleging that if God ruled the world, so much wickedness and impiety would not be tolerated therein; that ingrateful and evil men could not so thrive and flourish; that more speedy and more severe vengeance would be executed; that benefits would not be scattered among the crowd of men, with so promiscuous and undistinguishing a freeness. But such discourses, on a just and true account, do only infer the great patience and clemency, the unconfined mercy and bounty of our Lord; that he is in disposition very different from pettish and impatient man, who, should he have the reins put into his hands, and in his administration of things should be so often neglected, crossed, abused, would soon overturn all things; and, being himself discomposed with passion, would precipitate the world into confusion and ruin.

Things would not have subsisted hitherto, and continued in

their orderly course, but by the moderation of an immense goodness; by that

——— magni custos clementia mundi.*

It is 'by the Lord's mercies that we (we, the whole body of sinful men, so guilty of heinous provocations and rebellions against our Maker) are not consumed.' And what again God in the prophet speaks concerning Israel, he might have applied to the whole nation of men: 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man.' The reason (for I am God, and not man) is observable; implying (on parity of reason in the cases, concerning that one nation, and concerning the body of men) that it is an indulgence and forbearance above, if not contrary to the temper of man, and even beyond human conceit, whereby the state of things here doth subsist, and is preserved from ruin.

Thus nature and thus providence do bear witness concerning the disposition of God. As for Scripture, there is nothing either in way of positive assertion more frequently inculcated, or by more illustrious examples set forth and made palpable, than this attribute of God. When God would impart a portraiture or description of himself to his dearest friend and favorite, Moses; the first and chief lineaments thereof are several sorts, or several instances of goodness; he expresses himself 'merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness:' (merciful: El rachum) a 'God of pitying,' or strong in pity; that is, most apt to commiserate and to succor those who are in need or distress. Gracious, that is, ready both freely to forgive wrongs, and to dispense favors. Long suffering, or *longus irarum*, that is, not soon moved, or apt easily to conceive displeasure; not hasty in execution of vengeance, or venting his anger in hurtful effects. Abundant in goodness, that is, not sparing as to quantity or quality, either in the multitude or magnitude of his favors, but in all respects

* Claud.

exceedingly liberal; conferring willingly both very many and very great benefits. Such did God represent himself to Moses, when he desired a fuller knowlege and nearer acquaintance with him, than ordinary means afford. The same character in substance we have often repeated, and sometimes with advantage of emphatical expression, well deserving our observation and regard; as when the prophet Joel saith, that God 'is penitent, or sorry, for evil inflicted;' and Micah, that 'he delighteth in mercy;' and when Nehemiah calleth him 'a God of pardons;' and when Isaiah represents him as 'waiting (or seeking occasions) to be gracious:' and all this in the Old Testament, where God seems to look on man with a less serene and debonair aspect. Indeed, as that dispensation (suitably to the nature and condition of things under it) doth set out God's mercy and goodness, with especial relation to this present world or temporal estate; so the New one more abundantly displays his more excellent care and love of our souls; his great tenderness of our spiritual and eternal welfare. It is all of it in its nature and design but as it were one intire declaration of the τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, (the beneficial disposition, the benignity, or bountifulness of God, as St. Paul telleth us;) it is a rare project of divine philanthropy; an illustrious affidavit of God's wonderful propensity to bless and save mankind; manifested by the highest expressions and instances of love and goodness that were possible. (For his not sparing his own Son, 'the express image of his substance,' the dearest object of his infinite love, the partaker of his eternal nature and glory, but delivering him up a sacrifice for our offences; his most earnest wooing our baseness and unworthiness to reconciliation with him, and admission or acceptance of his favor; his tendering on so fair and easy terms an endless life in perfect joy and bliss; his furnishing us with so plentiful means and powerful aids for attaining that happy state—how pregnant demonstrations are these, of unspeakable goodness toward us! whence) The ordinary titles in this dispensation attributed unto him, are the God of love and peace, of hope, of patience; of all grace, of all consolation; the father of pities, rich in mercy, full of bowels; love and goodness itself. Thus doth the Scripture positively assert God's goodness; thus it directly represents and

describes his gracious disposition toward us. And as for examples, (which must serve as to illustrate and explain, so also to verify and assure matters of this nature,) if we carefully attend to God's ordinary proceedings with men there recorded, we shall find this disposition very conspicuous in them. Who can recount the number, or set out the value of those instances wherein God's goodness is expressed toward such as loved him? of his admirable condescension in drawing them to him; of the affectionate tenderness with which he constantly embraced them; of his merciful indulgence toward them, when provoked by their untowardly behavior; of his kind acceptance and munificent recompensing their endeavors to please him; of his deep compassionating their sufferings; of his vigilant carefulness over them, and over all their concernments? Methinks the highest expressions that language, assisted with all its helps of metaphor and resemblance, can afford, are very languid and faint in comparison of what they strain to represent, when the goodness of God toward them who love him comes to be expressed: 'As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him:' 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him:' so David strives to utter it, but with similitudes far short of the truth. If any will come near to reach it, it is that in Moses and Zechariah, when they are compared to 'the apple of God's eye,' that is, to the most dear and tender part, as it were, about him.

We find them often styled, and ever treated, as friends and as children; and that in a sense transcending the vulgar signification of those words; for what friendship could endure, could pass over, could forget, could admit an intire reconciliation and re-establishment in affection after such heinous indignities, such infidelities, such undutifulness, as were those of Adam, of Noah, of David, of Peter? Who would have received into favor and familiarity a Manasses, a Magdalen, a Paul? Who would so far extend his regard on the posterity (on such a posterity, so untoward, so unworthy) of his friend, as God did on that of Abraham, in respect unto him? What great prince would employ his principal courtiers to guard and serve a poor attendant, a mean subject of his? Yet, 'the angel of

the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;' and many instances we have of those glorious inhabitants of heaven by God's appointment stooping down to wait on and to perform service to the sons of men. But on examples of this nature, being numberless, and composing indeed the main body of the sacred history, (it being chiefly designed to represent them,) I shall not insist; I shall only observe, for preventing or satisfying objections, (yea, indeed, for turning them to the advantage and confirmation of that which we assert,) that even in those cases, wherein God's highest severity hath been exercised, when God hath purposed to exhibit most dreadful instances of his justice on the most provocative occasions; we may discern his goodness eminently showing itself: that even in the greatest extremity of his displeasure, in his acts of highest vengeance, mercy doth κατακαυχᾶσθαι τῆς κρίσεως, (as St. James speaketh,) 'boast itself, and triumph over justice:' that God, as the sun, (to use Tertullian's similitude,) when he seems most to infest and scorch us, doth even then dispense useful and healthful influences on us. Even, I say, in the most terrible and amazing examples of divine justice (such as were the ejecting and excluding mankind from paradise; the general destruction in the deluge; the exscinding and extirpation of the Amorites, together with other inhabitants of Canaan; the delivering Israel and Judah into the Assyrian thraldom, the final destruction of Jerusalem, together with the dispersion of the Jewish nation over the world, and its sad consequences) we may (not hardly) observe particulars, more than savoring of great mercy and goodness.

1. That (in most of these cases, in all according to some account) God was not moved to the displeasure productive of those effects but on very great considerations. That he did not seek advantages, nor embrace all occasions; but was incensed by superlative degrees of iniquity and impurity, (such in their own nature, and much aggravated by their circumstances,) such as rendered common life inconvenient and insupportable to men; made the earth to stink with their filth and corruption; to groan under the burden and weight of them; to pant and labor for a riddance from them.

2. That God did not on the first glimpses of provocation proceed to the execution and discharge of his wrath, but did with wonderful patience expect a change in the offenders, 'waiting to be gracious,' as the prophet speaketh; affording more than competent time, and means more than sufficient of appeasing him by repentance; vouchsafing frequent admonitions, solicitations, threatenings, moderate corrections, and other such proper methods conducing to their amendment and to their preservation.

3. That the inflictions themselves, how grievous soever in appearance, were not really extreme in measure; not accompanied with so acute torments, nor with so lingering pains, nor with so utter a ruin, as might have been inflicted; but that (as Ezra, in respect to one of those cases, confesseth) they 'were less than their iniquities deserved.' That, as it is in the psalm, 'He did not stir up all his wrath;' which would have immediately consumed them, or infinitely tormented them.

4. That (consequently on some of those premises) the afflictions brought on them were in a sort rather necessary than voluntary in respect of him; rather a natural fruit of their dispositions and dealings, than a free result of his will; however contrary to his primary intentions and desires. Whence he no less truly than earnestly disclaims having any pleasure in their death, that he 'afflicted willingly, or grieved the children of men;' and charges their disasters on themselves, as the sole causes of them.

5. That farther, the chastisements inflicted were wholesome and profitable, both in their own nature, and according to his design; both in respect to the generality of men, (who by them were warned, and by such examples deterred from incurring the like mischiefs; were kept from the inconveniences, secured from the temptations, the violences, the allurements, the contagions of the present evil state; according to that reason alleged for punishments of this kind: 'All the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously,') and in regard to the sufferers themselves, who thereby were prevented from proceeding farther in their wicked courses; accumulating (or 'treasuring up,' as the Apostle speaketh) farther degrees of wrath, as obdurate and incorrigible people will surely do: ('Why,'

saith the prophet, 'should ye be stricken any more?' (to what purpose is moderate correction?) 'Ye will revolt more and more.') That he did with a kind of violence to his own inclinations, and reluctancy, inflict punishments on them. 'O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?' Yea, farther:

6. That during their sufferance God did bear compassion toward them who underwent it. 'His bowels,' as we are told, 'sounded and were troubled;' his 'heart was turned within him;' his 'repentings were kindled together;' 'in all their afflictions himself was afflicted;' 'he remembered, and considered they were but dust;' that they 'were but flesh,' that they were but of a weak and frail temper; that they were naturally prone to corruption and evil,) and did therefore pity their infirmity and their misery.

7. That God 'in his wrath remembered mercy,' (as the prophet Habakkuk speaks,) mixing gracious intentions of future refreshment and reparation with the present executions of justice. 'I know,' saith he in the prophet Jeremiah, 'the thoughts that I think toward you; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Behold, I will bring health and cure, I will cure them, and will reveal unto them abundance of peace and truth.' And, 'For a small moment,' saith he again in Isaiah, 'have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.' And, 'Ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought on Jerusalem'—and, 'ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it,' saith the Lord; (he saith so in Ezekiel;) 'without cause;' that is without a beneficial design toward them.

8. Lastly, that he always signified a readiness to turn from his anger, and to forgive them; and on very equal and easy terms to be fully reconciled to them; according to that in the psalm, 'He doth not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever;' but on any reasonable overtures of humiliation, confession, and conversion to him, was ready to abate, yea, to remove the effects of his displeasure: 'Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.'

These particulars, if we attentively survey those dreadful

examples of divine severity forementioned, (the greatest which history acquaints us with, or which have been showed on this theatre of human affairs,) we may observe most of them in all, all of them in some, either plainly expressed, or sufficiently insinuated by the circumstances observable in the historical narrations concerning them; so that even the harshest instances of God's wrathful dealing with some men, may well serve to the illustration of his mercy and goodness toward all men; may evince it true, what our Lord affirms, that God is *χρηστὸς ἐπὶ ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηρούς*, 'kind and beneficent even to the most ingrateful and unworthy persons.' To make which observation good, and consequently to assert the verity of our text (that 'God is good unto all, and merciful over all his works') against the most plausible exceptions, I shall examine the particulars in the following discourse.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXIX.

PSALM CXLV.—VERSE 9.

THE several instances of divine wrath particularly specified.

I. The punishment inflicted on mankind for the first transgression. This contains so much of depth and mystery, surpassing all capacity of man to reach, that it cannot be thoroughly explained. It indeed is clear that God did in his proceedings intend remarkably to evidence his grievous indignation against wilful disobedience; yet in the management thereof we may observe, that,

1. After such high provocation, God expressed his resentment in so calm and gentle a manner, that Adam, though abashed by the conscience of his fault, was not by the vehemence of the reproof utterly dismayed or dejected.

2. God used great moderation in the infliction of this punishment, mitigating the extremity of the sentence justly decreed and plainly declared to Adam.

3. He did not quite reject man thereon, or withdraw his care and providence from him.

4. Although man by his fault lost great advantages, yet still the mercy of God left him in no deplorable state, even as to his life here.

5. The event manifests that while God in appearance so severely punished mankind, he did in his mind reserve thoughts of highest kindness toward us, &c. So that in this heaviest instance of vengeance, God's exceeding goodness clearly shines forth.

II. The calamity, which by the general deluge did overflow

the world, was not brought on men but in regard to the most enormous offences long continued in, and after amendment was become desperate; not till, after much forbearance, men were grown to a superlative pitch of wickedness, when it became, as it were, a mercy to snatch them from so wretched and incorrigible a condition: this topic enlarged on.

III. In the next place, as to that extermination of the Canaanites, which bears so horrible an aspect of severity, we may find it qualifiable, if we consider the nature of their trespasses, which were insufferably heinous and abominable; so that if it were not a favor to the incorrigible authors themselves, it was so to their posterity, whom they might have brought forth as successors to their courses and the consequences of them: nor were they destroyed from the land, until it grew uninhabitable through them in any tolerable manner, and *did*, as the Scripture significantly expresses it, *spue them out*, &c.

IV. The like account may be rendered of God's judgments on the people of Israel. If we consult the prophets, who declare the true state of things that brought these judgments down from heaven, we shall see that they came on account of an universal apostacy from the faith and practice of true religion; from *a deep corruption*, perverting all truth and right; and a compliance with the most abominable practices: that they were inflicted after all methods of reclaiming them had been tried in vain; after innumerable provocations on the one part, and extreme patience on the other; and that even during the execution of them, God did still retain thoughts of favor, and intentions of doing good to his ungrateful and incorrigible people.

V. As for the last so calamitous and piteous destruction of Jerusalem, with the grievous consequences thereof, the former considerations may still be applied, as well as what was peculiar in that case; namely, the means which God used for removing those provocatives of vengeance, which, as our Lord himself

said, were sufficient to have converted Tyre and Sidon: these fully dilated on. Whence we may conclude that all those passages of divine providence, which seem at first sight most opposed to his mercy, do, when well sifted, serve rather to corroborate it.

Enumeration of the uses to which the consideration of God's goodness should be applied.

1. It should beget in us hearty love and reverence towards him, in regard to this attribute, so amiable in itself, and beneficial to us. 2. It should produce also real endeavors of thankful obedience in our lives. 3. It should engage us the more to fear God, according to the prophet's admonition, *Fear the Lord and his goodness.* 4. It should humble and grieve us to have crossed and offended such exceeding goodness and mercy. 5. It should therefore render us wary and vigilant against the commission of any sin, and the guilt of ingratitude. 6. It should also breed and nourish in us faith and hope in God. 7. It should on the same account excite us to a free exercise of all devotions. 8. It ought to render us submissive, patient, and contented under God's hand of correction or trial, as knowing it cannot be without just cause that such goodness is displeased with us. 9. It should also, in gratitude towards God, and imitation of him, engage us to be kind, bountiful, and affectionate towards our fellow creatures. 10. Lastly, we ought to have an especial care lest we pervert this excellent truth by mistakes and vain presumptions; lest we turn *the grace of God into wantonness,* or the occasion of licentious practice. Conclusion.

SERMON LXIX.

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM CXLV.—VERSE 9.

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

I SHALL now more particularly consider the several instances before mentioned.

I. The punishment inflicted on mankind for the first transgression containeth in it much of depth and mystery, surpassing perhaps all capacity of man to reach; its full comprehension being by divine wisdom, I conceive, purposely concealed from us; so that I cannot pretend thoroughly to explain it; and shall not therefore speak much about it.

This indeed is clear, that God did in his proceedings, occasioned thereby, intend remarkably to evidence his grievous resentment and indignation against wilful disobedience; yet in the management thereof we may observe, that,

1. After that provocation (in itself so high, and liable to so great aggravations) God did express his resentment in so calm and gentle a manner, that Adam, though abashed on the conscience of his fault, was not yet by the vehemency of the reproof utterly dismayed or dejected.*

2. God used great moderation in the infliction of this punishment; mitigating the extremity of the sentence justly decreed and plainly declared to Adam, (that, in case of his offending

* Vid. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε, καθάπερ εἰκὸς ἦν ὑβρισμένον εἰπεῖν. ὦ μιαρὲ, καὶ παμμίαρε, &c.—Ibid.

against the law prescribed him, he should immediately die,) for notwithstanding his forfeiture that very day of life, God reprieved him, and allowed him a long life, almost of a thousand years, after.

3. God did not quite reject man thereon, nor did withdraw his fatherly care and providence from him, but openly continued them; insomuch that immediately after the curse pronounced on our first parents, the next passage we meet with is, that unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats, and clothed them.

4. Although indeed man was by his fault a great loser, and became deprived of high advantages; yet the mercy of God did leave him in no very deplorable estate, simply considered, as to his life here; the relics of his first estate, and the benefits continued to him, being very considerable; so that we the inheritors of that great disaster do commonly find the enjoyment of life, with the conveniences attending it, to be sweet and desirable.

5. The event manifests that while God in appearance so severely punished mankind, he did in his mind reserve thoughts of highest kindness toward us; even then designing not only to restore us to our former degree, but to raise us to a capacity of obtaining a far more high pitch of happiness. While he excluded us from a terrestrial paradise here, he provided a far better celestial one, into which, if we please, by obedience to his holy laws, we may certainly enter. So that in this of all most heavy instance of vengeance, God's exceeding goodness and clemency do on several considerations most clearly shine.

II. The calamity, which by the general deluge did overflow the world, was not (we may consider) brought on men but in regard to the most enormous offences long continued in, and after amendment was become desperate: not till after much forbearance, and till men were grown to a superlative pitch of wickedness, by no fit means (by no friendly warning, no sharp reprehension, no moderate chastisement) corrigible; not until the earth was become (especially for persons of any innocence or integrity) no tolerable habitation, but a theatre of lamentable tragedies, a seat of horrid iniquity, a sink of loathsome impurity. So that in reason it was to be esteemed rather a favor to

mankind, to rescue it from so unhappy a state, than to suffer it to persist therein. To snatch men away out of so uncomfortable a place, from so wretched a condition, was a mercy; it had been a judgment to have left them annoying, rifling, and harassing; biting, tearing, and devouring; yea, defiling and debauching each other; and so heaping on themselves loads of guilt, and deeper obligations to vengeance. 'The earth,' saith the text, 'was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth;' which universal and extreme corruption had not in probability sprung up in a small time; for,

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus,—

is true not only of single men, but of communities; no people, no age doth suddenly degenerate into extreme degrees of wickedness; so that the divine patience had long endured and attended on men, before the resolution of thus punishing them was taken up; the which also was not at first peremptory and irreversible, but in God's design and desire it was revocable; for the world had a long reprieve after the sentence passed; execution was deferred till Noah's long preaching of righteousness, and denouncing of judgment in a manner so notorious and signal, (not by verbal declarations only, but by the visible structure of the ark,) could prevail nothing toward their amendment, but was either distrusted or disregarded, and perhaps derided by them. For, as St. Peter tells us, 'they were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing;' that is, (as is collected by several interpreters from the text of the story,) during no less than one hundred and twenty years; a competent time for their recollecting themselves, and endeavoring by amendment of life to prevent the ruin threatened to come on them. Yet notwithstanding that this obstinate and incorrigible disobedience did so much displease God, as that in consideration thereof God is said to have 'repented that he made man on the earth,' and to have been thereby grieved at the heart: yet did he so temper his anger as not utterly to destroy mankind, but provided against its total ruin, by preserving one family as a seminary

thereof; preserving the father thereof (questionless by a special grace) from the spreading contagion, inspiring him with faith, and qualifying him for the favor, which by him he designed to communicate unto the world; the reparation thereof, and restoring the generations of men. So that also through this passage of providence, how dismal and dreadful soever at first sight, much goodness will be transparent to him that looks on it attentively.

III. In the next place, as to that extermination and excision of the Canaanites, which carries so horrible an appearance of severity, we may find it qualifiable, if we consider that for the nature of the trespasses which procured it, they were insufferably heinous and abominable: most sottish, barbarous, and base superstitions, (cruelty and impurity being essential ingredients into their performances of religion, and it being piety with them to be exceedingly wicked,) and in their other practice most beastly lasciviousnesses, most bloody violences, oppressions, and rapines generally abounding. So that for those men themselves, who were by turns, as it happened, the authors and the objects of these dealings, it could not be desirable to continue in a state of living so wretched and uncomfortable. Impunity had been no mercy to such people, but rather a cruelty; cutting them off must needs be the greatest favor they were capable of, it being only removing them from a hell here, and preventing their deserving many worse hells hereafter. Even to themselves it was a favor, and a greater one to their posterity, whom they might have brought forth to succeed into their courses, and to the consequences of them; whom they would have engaged into their wicked customs and their woful mischiefs. They were not so destroyed from the land, until it grew uninhabitable in any tolerable manner, and itself could not, as it were, endure them any longer, but (as the text doth most significantly express it) 'did spue them out;' being like a stomach surcharged with foul or poisonous matter, which it loathes, and is pained with, and therefore naturally labors to expel. Neither was this sad doom executed on them till after four hundred years of forbearance; for even in Abraham's time God took notice of their iniquity, then born and growing; and gave account of his suspending their punishment; 'because,' said

he, 'the iniquity of the Amorites' was not yet full, (that is, was not yet arrived to a pitch of desperate obstinacy and incorrigibility:) while there was the least glimpse of hope, the least relics of any reason, any regret, any shame in them, the least possibility of recovery, God stopped his avenging hand: but when all ground of hope was removed, the whole stock of natural light and strength was embezzled, all fear, all remorse, all modesty were quite banished away, all means of cure had proved ineffectual, the gangrene of vice had seized on every part, iniquity was grown mature and mellow; then was the stroke of justice indeed not more seasonable than necessary; then was the fatal sword the only proper remedy; then so with one stroke to cut off them, and their sins, and their mischiefs, and their miseries together, was an argument no less strong and clear of God's merciful goodness, than of his just anger toward them.

IV. The like account we may render of God's judgments on the people of Israel. If we consult the prophets, who declare the state of things, the facts, the dispositions, the guilts, that brought them down from heaven, we shall see that they came on account of an universal apostacy from both the faith and practice of true religion; a deep corruption ('like that in the days of Gibeah,' as the prophet Hosea speaketh) in mind and manners; an utter perverting of all truth and right; an obstinate compliance with, or emulation of, the most abominable practices of the heathen nations about them; an universal apostacy, I say, from God and all goodness; a thorough prevalence of all iniquity. Hear the prophets expressing it, and describing them. Jeremiah; 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.' Isaiah; 'The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant: Ah, sinful nation! a people laden with iniquities, a seed of evil doers; children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward,' &c. Thus do these and other prophets in a

like strain describe in the gross the state of things preceding those judgments. And in Ezekiel (in divers places, particularly in the 8th, but especially in the 22d chapter) we have their offences in detail, and by parts (their gross impieties, their grievous cruelties, extortions, and oppressions) set out copiously, and in most lively colours. And as the quality of their provocations was so bad, and the extension of them so large, so was their condition desperate; there were no means of remedy left, no hopes of amendment; so was their forehead covered with impudence, their heart hardened with obstinacy, their minds deeply tinctured with habitual pravity and perverseness: 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil,' saith Jeremiah concerning them. All methods of reclaiming them had proved fruitless; no favorable dealings, no gentle admonition or kind instruction would avail any thing; for it is of them the prophet Isaiah saith, 'Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness.' No advices, no reproofs (how frequent, how vehement, how urgent soever) had any effect on them. Almighty God declares often that he had spoken unto them rising up early, but they would not hear nor regard his speech; did not only neglect, and refuse, but despise, loathe, mock, and reproach it, (turning their back on him, pulling away their shoulder, stiffening their neck, and stopping their ears, that they should not hear;) that he had spread out his hands all the day long to a rebellious and gainsaying people; to a people that (with extreme insolence and immodesty) provoked him to anger continually to his face. Nor could any tenders of mercy allure or move them: 'I said (God said it in Jeremiah) after all these things, Turn unto me; but she returned not. Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin;' and innumerable the like overtures we have of grace and mercy to them; all which they proudly and perversely rejected, persisting in their wicked courses: they even expelled and silenced, they rudely treated and persecuted the prophets sent unto them with messages of kind warning and

overtures of grace; so obstructing all access of mercy to themselves: 'They say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things:' so Isaiah reports their proceeding. 'Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?' so St. Stephen expostulates with them. Neither were gentler chastisements designed for their correction and cure anywise available; they made no impression on them, they produced no change in them: 'In vain,' saith God, 'I have smitten your children, they have received no correction.' And, 'Thou hast smitten them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return.' And, 'The people turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.' Unto this καταρτισμὸς εἰς ἀπώλειαν, this perfect fitness, (as St. Paul speaketh,) this maturity of desperate and irrecoverable impiety, had that people grown, not at once, and on a sudden, but by continual steps of provocation, through a long course of time, during that divine patience sparing them, and by various expedients striving to recover them. This consideration is frequently insisted on, especially in the prophet Jeremiah: 'The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth:' 'Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them; yet they hearkened not unto me,' &c. Well then, after so many hundred years of abused patience, and unsuccessful labor to reclaim them, it was needful that justice should have her course on them: yet how then did God inflict it, with what mildness and moderation, with what pity and relenting? 'Nevertheless,' say they in Nehemiah, 'for thy great mercies sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.' And, 'Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve,' doth Ezra confess. 'I will not execute the fierceness of my anger,' doth God himself resolve and declare in Hosea. So mild he was as to the measure of his punishing; and what compassion accompanied it, those pathetical expressions declare: 'My heart is turned within me, my repentings

are kindled together.' 'Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him.' 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted,' &c. We may add, that notwithstanding all these provocations of his wrath, and abusings of his patience, which thus necessitated God to execute his vengeance; yet even during the execution thereof, and while his hand was so stretched forth against them, he did retain thoughts of favor and intentions of doing good, even toward this so ingrateful, so insensible, so incorrigible a people: 'For a small moment,' saith God, 'have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee: I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' Now these things being seriously laid together, have we not occasion and ground sufficient even in this instance, no less to admire and adore the wonderful benignity, mercy, and patience of God, than to dread and tremble at his justice?

V. As for the last so calamitous and piteous destruction of Jerusalem, with the grievous consequences thereof, as we might apply thereto the former considerations, so we shall only observe what was peculiar in that case; that God dispensed such means to prevent it, (to remove the meritorious causes thereof, obstinate impenitency and incredulity; resisting the truth by him sent from heaven with so clear a revelation and powerful confirmation; despising the Spirit of God, and the dictates of their own conscience; basely misusing divers ways, and at last cruelly murdering the Son of God;) such means, I say, God did employ for the removing those provocatives of vengeance, which, as our Lord himself saith, were sufficient to have converted Tyre and Sidon; yea, to have preserved Sodom itself; so that our Saviour could with a compassionate grief deplore the unsuccessfulness of his tender affection, and solicitous care for their welfare, in these passionate terms: 'How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, but ye would not!' That St. John the Baptist's sharp reproofs, his powerful exhortations, his downright and clear forewarnings of what would follow, ('Even now,' said he, 'the axe is laid to the root of the tree,') attended with so re-

markable circumstances of his person and his carriage, (which induced all the world about him to regard him as no ordinary man, but a special instrument of God and messenger from heaven,) did yet find no effect considerable: the pharisees and lawyers, those corrupt guides, whose authority managed the blind multitude, 'defeating the counsel of God toward themselves,' as St. Luke speaketh, (that is, defeating his gracious purpose of reclaiming them from disobedience, and consequently of withholding the judgments imminent,) they reviled the person of that venerable prophet; 'He hath a devil,' said they: they slighted his premonitions, and rejected his advices, by observing which, those dreadful mischiefs, which fell on their rebellious heads, might have been averted. We may add, that even those fearful judgments were tempered with mixtures of favorable design, not only to the community of mankind, (which, by so remarkable a vengeance on the persecutors of our Lord and the scorners of his doctrine, was converted unto, or confirmed in, the Christian faith,) but even toward that people whom it served to convince of their errors and crimes; to induce them to repentance, to provoke them unto the acknowlegement and embracing of God's truth, so palpably vindicated by him. So that I might here apply that passage of St. Paul, (if not directly and adequately according to his sense, yet with no incongruous allusion at least,) 'Have they stumbled, that they should fall?' (or, was there no other design of God's judgments on them, but their utter ruin?) μὴ γένοιτο· 'No such matter; but through their fall salvation came to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy' (or emulation.) And, in effect, as our Lord in the midst of his sufferings did affectionately pray for God's mercy on them, as the Apostles did offer reconciliation unto them all indifferently, who would repent, and were willing to embrace it; so were such of them as were disposed to comply with those invitations, received to grace, how deeply soever involved in the continued guilt of those enormous persecutions, injuries, and blasphemies; as particularly St. Paul, that illustrious example of God's patience and mercy in this case. So that neither by this instance is any attribute of God more signalised than his transcendent goodness, in like manner as by the former instances, and in analogy

to them by all others, that may be assigned. By all of them it will appear that God is primarily and of himself disposed to do all fitting and possible good to men, not to inflict evil more than is fit and necessary; that God is indeed *optimus ex naturæ proprietate*, ('most good according to property of nature,') although *justus ex causæ necessitate*, ('severe from the necessity of the case,') as Tertullian speaketh. To afflict men (either some men singly, or whole societies of men) may be sometimes expedient on several accounts; for vindicating the esteem, and supporting the interest of goodness, which may by impunity be disgraced, endamaged, endangered; for the discrimination of good and evil men, in an observable manner; for the encouragement and comfort of the good, the reduction and amendment of the bad; for preventing the contagion, and stopping the progress of iniquity, whereon greater guilts and worse mischiefs would ensue: it may be as necessary as sharp physic to cure public or private distempers; as an instrument of rousing us out of our sinful lethargies; as that which may cause us better to understand ourselves, and more to remember God; as a ground of fearing God, and an inducement to believe his providence. For those and many such purposes, to bring on men things distasteful to sense may be very requisite; nor doth the doing it anywise prejudice the truth of divine goodness, but rather confirms it, commends it, and advances its just esteem. It would be a fond indulgence, not a wise kindness; a cruel, rather than a loving pity, to deal otherwise. In fine, we are to consider that all the mischiefs we undergo, God doth not so much bring them on us, as we do pull them on ourselves. They are αὐθαίρετα πήματα, 'affected, or self-chosen mischiefs;' they are κακὰ βλαστήματα προαιρέσεως, 'bad sprouts of our free choice,' as a Father calls them; they are, as another Father saith, ἑκουσίων κακῶν ἀκούσια ἔκγονα, 'the unwilling offsprings of wilful evils;' they are the certain results of our own will, or the natural fruits of our actions; actions, which (however God desire, advise, command, persuade, entreat, excite) we do will, we are resolved to perform. 'We in a manner,' as Salvian saith,* 'do force God to do whatever he

* Salv. lib. 5. et 8.

doeth in this kind; violently plucking down vengeance on our own heads; compelling the kind and merciful Lord, against his nature and will, to afflict us; not so much as giving him leave to spare us.' God vehemently disclaims himself to be the original cause; to design, (according to absolute or primary intention,) to desire, to delight in our grief, or our ruin. 'As I live, saith the Lord,' (and surely when God swears, we may believe that he is very serious,) 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' 'I call heaven to record this day against you, that I have set life and death before you: therefore choose life.' 'He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.' 'He would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowlege of the truth. He would not have any perish, but that all should come to repentance.' 'He made not death, nor hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living.' God then, if we may believe him, is not the first author of our calamities. Who then? He tells us himself: 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: thou hast fallen by thine own iniquity.' 'Your sins have withholden good things from you.' 'Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.' 'How often would I have gathered you, but ye would not!' The designs and the endeavors of God do tend to our welfare and salvation; it is our will and our actions which only procure our ruin: 'It is we,' that, as the wise man saith, 'seek death in the error of our life, and pull on our own selves destruction. So that, to conclude this part of our discourse, even those passages of providence, which at first glimpse appear most opposite or disadvantageous to the goodness of God, (or to our opinion and belief concerning it,) do, being well sifted, nowise prejudice it, but rather serve to corroborate and magnify it.

I shall only farther briefly touch (or rather but mention) the uses and effects, to the producing which, the consideration of God's goodness, in so manifold ways declared, should be applied.

1. It should beget in us hearty love and reverence toward God, in regard to this attribute so excellent and amiable in itself, so beneficial and advantageous to us. What can we esteem, what can we love, if so admirable goodness doth not af-

fect us? How prodigiously cold and hard is that heart, which cannot be warmed and softened into affection by so melting a consideration!

2. It should produce, as grateful sense in our hearts, so real endeavors of thankful obedience in our lives. It should make us 'walk worthy of God, to all well-pleasing, bringing forth fruit in every good work;' taking heed of doing as did Hezekiah, of whom it is said, that 'he rendered not according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore was wrath on him:' that we may not have that expostulation justly applied unto us, 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise!'

3. It should engage us the more to fear God; complying with the prophet's admonition, 'Fear the Lord and his goodness;' considering that intimation of the psalmist, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' observing that advice of Samuel, 'Only fear the Lord, and serve him; for consider what great things he hath done for you.' For that indeed nothing is more terrible than goodness slighted and patience abused.

4. It should humble, ashame, and grieve us, for having crossed and offended such exceeding goodness and mercy. It should cause us greatly to detest our sins, which lie under so heinous an aggravation: to be deeply displeased with ourselves, who have so unworthily committed them.

5. It should therefore render us wary and vigilant against the commission of any sin; that is, of incurring the guilt of so enormous ingratitude and baseness; making us cautious of doing like those, of whom it is confessed in Nehemiah; 'They did eat, and were filled, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness: nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy laws behind their back.'

6. It should also breed and nourish in us faith and hope in God. For what reason can we have to distrust of so great goodness; that he will refuse to help us in our need; that he will fail in accomplishment of his promises; that he will withhold what is convenient for us? It should preserve us from despair. What temptation can we have to despair of mercy, if we heartily

repent of our misdoings, and sincerely endeavor to please him?

7. It should on the same account excite us to a free and constant exercise of all devotions. For why should we be shy or fearful of entering into so friendly and favorable a presence? why should we be backward from having (on any occasion or need) a recourse to him who is so willing, so desirous, so ready to do us good? what should hinder us from delighting in oblations of blessing and praise unto him?

8. It ought to render us submissive, patient, and contented under God's hand, of correction, or trial, as knowing that it cannot be without very just cause, that such goodness seemeth displeased with us; that we are the chief causes of our suffering, or our want; so that we can have no good cause to repine or complain: for, 'Wherefore doth the living man complain? since a man (suffers) for the punishment of his sins;' since it is 'our sins that withhold good things from us;' since also we considering this attribute may be assured that all God's dispensations do aim and tend to our good.

9. It should also, in gratitude toward God and imitation of him, engage us to be good, kind, and bountiful, placable, and apt to forgive; meek and gentle, pitiful, and affectionate toward our brethren; 'to be good and merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful and benign even' toward the wicked and ungrateful: to be 'kind unto one another, full of bowels, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.'

10. Lastly, we ought to have an especial care of perverting this excellent truth by mistakes and vain presumptions; that we 'do not turn the grace of God into wantonness,' or occasion of licentious practice. Because God is very good and merciful, we must not conceive him to be fond, or slack, or careless; that he is apt to indulge us in sin, or to connive at our presumptuous transgression of his laws. No; *ἕπεται τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἢ ἀγαθὸν, ἡ μισοπονηρία*, ('the hatred of wickedness is consequent on goodness even as such,' as Clemens Alexandrinus saith,) God, even as he is good, cannot but detest that which is opposite and prejudicial to goodness; he cannot but maintain the honor and interest thereof; he cannot, he will not endure us to dishonor

him, to wrong our neighbor, to spoil ourselves. As he is a sure friend to us as his creatures, so he is an implacable enemy to us as impenitent rebels and apostates from our duty. 'The wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.' As he is infinitely benign, so he is also perfectly 'holy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.' 'He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hateth all workers of iniquity.' 'His face is against them that do evil.' Finally, as God is gracious to all such as are capable of his love, and qualified for his mercy; so he is an impartial and upright Judge, who will deal with men according to their deserts, according to the tenor of his laws and ordinances; according to his immutable decree and word: so that as we have great reason to trust and hope in him, so we have no true ground to presume on him, vainly to trifle, or insolently to dally with him.

But I leave this point to be farther improved by your meditations.

'Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may through thy grace be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honor and praise of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXX.

ROMANS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 11.

It is an ordinary conceit, that God deals partially with men; and this imagination often has an influence on our actions: proper consideration, however, will show that this is a great mistake, and that God in fact distributes his favors with an equal hand.

The advantages which one man possesses above another, estimated morally in respect to solid happiness, are none; at least are not absolutely made by God, but framed by men themselves. For,

God is indifferently affected towards persons, as such; or as divested of moral qualifications and actions: this enlarged on.

Such also in holy Scripture he represents himself on various occasions: testimonies on this head quoted.

This impartiality of God demonstrated by divers arguments, some proving it must be so, others showing it is so: some inferring it, *a priori*, from God's attributes, others arguing it, *a posteriori*, from instances of his proceedings and providential dispensations. Of the first sort are these:

I. God is impartial, because he is perfectly wise, and thence he truly estimates persons and things: wherefore he cannot have any blind affection toward any person, grounded on no reason, or on prejudice. This argument is often used in Scripture: instances quoted.

II. God cannot be partial, because he is perfectly righteous, just, and holy: which reason, joined to the former, makes up a complete demonstration: this explained.

III. God is impartial, because he is infinitely great and potent; whence all creatures are in the same degree inferior, and equally remote from him: he hath no need of any: this point illustrated from Scripture.

IV. He is also impartial, because he is immensely good; so that he favors all equally, because all thoroughly, as far as may be, according to their condition and capacity: whence if there be any difference, the ground thereof must lie in the different qualifications of his creatures.

V. God is impartial towards all persons, because he has the same (natural and original) relations towards all.

1. He is the Maker and Father of all, and must therefore have the same parental kindness towards all, according to Job xxxiv. 19., &c. 2. He is the common Lord of all, and therefore is concerned to protect all with equal care, and to govern all with the same equity. 3. He is the *Saviour of all*, desiring and designing that *all men should be saved;* wherefore out of this his universal love he sent his Son to be the Redeemer of mankind, to *taste death for every man:* and what greater instance could there be of perfect impartiality?

The same may also be declared from his proceedings and dealings with men. For,

1. God has proposed to all men indifferently the same terms and conditions of obtaining his love and favor, and of enjoying his rewards: he has not framed one law, or one gospel, for princes or great men, and another for peasants or mean persons; but rich and poor are all tied down to observe his precepts.

II. All persons have the same means, the same aids, the same supports afforded to them, for performing their duty, and attaining to their happiness. The universal good spirit of God, the fountain of light, power, and joy, is communicated to all men, according to their needs and the exigencies of occasion.

III. God has provided, and proposes to all men the same

encouragements for obedience, the same punishments for transgression; the which being the same in kind, only differ in degree, according to the good deeds or demerits of persons: this topic enlarged on.

IV. The impartiality of God farther appears from his universal providence, carefully watching over all and every person, dispensing good things according to their wants.

V. All Christians without distinction have the same illustrious relations and honorable privileges: these dilated on, and illustrated from Scripture.

VI. All men are liable to the same judgment, at the same tribunal, before that one impartial inflexible judge, who cannot be corrupted with gifts, dazzled with shows, or moved by any sinister regards. Before that bar all persons must stand on equal ground, and without any advantage: this topic enlarged on. Thus it may appear that God is impartial. But there are various objections against this doctrine which remain to be answered.

Obj. 1. Is it not apparent that the gifts of God are distributed with great inequality? Does not one swim in wealth and luxury, whilst another couches under the burden of extreme want and misery? do not some thrive, whilst others are disappointed, &c.? To which exception it may be answered,

1. That temporal things are so inconsiderable, that they scarcely deserve to come into the balance, &c. 2. The goods of fortune commonly are dispensed not by a special hand of God, but according to the general course of providence. 3. The receiving of them is no sign of his special regard: (Eccles. ix. 1. 2.) 4. God, as St. Austin says, so dispenses them, to show their little value. 5. Even temporal goods are dispensed with an even hand, if we make a right estimate of things; and if wealth have more pleasures, it also has more cares, &c. 6. These goods are not purely gifts, but talents deposited in trust for God's service, for which a proportionate

return is expected. 7. Many such are not dispensed with personal regard, but for public good, and therefore all have an interest in them.

Obj. 2. It is apparent that God dispenses his grace, the light of knowlege, and means of salvation, very unequally; some nations living in the clear sunshine of the gospel, whilst others *sit in darkness, and brutal ignorance.*

To answer this fully would require a long discourse: but briefly it may be said; 1. that God dispenses measures of grace according to a just, though inscrutable wisdom, knowing what use will be made thereof, and what *fruit* men will *bear:* it may therefore be a favor not to dispense light to those who are not prepared to receive it. 2. No man can tell what God does in preparation, and what obstructions are made by men to his grace. 3. As lower measures of it are conferred, so proportionably less returns are expected. 4. Our ignorance in this respect should not prejudice the belief of those general truths, which are so plainly declared, of his goodness.

Obj. 3. Is it not in Scripture sometimes asserted that God acts arbitrarily? Instances quoted.—Answer. He acts, not without reason, but on reasons incomprehensible or inscrutable to us: this point farther enlarged on.

Obj. 4. Had not particular persons, like John the Baptist, and St. Paul, absolute favors and graces conferred on them?

Answer.—These favors were in design not so much particular and personal as general and public: those persons were raised up by God as instruments of his mercies to instruct men, and bring them to himself.

The consideration of this point is very useful, and may dispose us to many sorts of good practice.

No man should presume on God's dealing with him, as if he were a favorite, or indulge himself in any practices through such a conceit: no man, on the other hand, should despair of God's favor, or be discouraged on account of his condition: no one

should repine at God's dealing with him, or pride himself on any temporal advantages, despising his brethren of lower degree, but should deal fairly, gently, and courteously with his inferiors. This consideration should also preserve us from superstition, or thinking to please God, win his favor, or appease his displeasure, by uncouth ways, and such as he hath not prescribed. It is also a matter of satisfaction, that whatever be our circumstances, God will have a fair regard to them. The consideration of this point should moreover keep us from partial respects of men, from admiring their state, or envying their worldly advantages. It should keep us from being scandalised, or imbibing false notions of God on occasion of mysterious points and hard expressions. It should engage us to pay due respect to princes, magistrates, &c. For hence we see that the reason of doing so is not their worldly grandeur, but their sacred relation to God, as his representatives and officers, who in his name maintain peace and order in the world: this topic enlarged on to the end.

SERMON LXX.

NO RESPECT OF PERSONS WITH GOD.

ROMANS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 11.

For there is no respect of persons with God.

It is an ordinary conceit, grounded on a superficial view of things, that Almighty God dispenseth his gifts with great inequality, and dealeth very partially with men; being lavish in his bounty to some, but sparing therein to others; slack and indulgent in calling some to account, but rigorous and severe in judgment toward others.

Which imagination often hath influence on the affections and the actions of men; so that hence some men do highly presume, others are much discouraged: some are apt to boast themselves special darlings and favorites of Heaven; others are tempted to complain of their being quite deserted, or neglected thereby.

But whoever more carefully will observe things, and weigh them with good consideration, shall find this to be a great mistake; and that in truth God distributeth his favors with very equal measures: he poiseth the scales of justice with a most even hand; so that reasonably no man should be exalted, no man should be dejected in mind, on account of any considerable difference in God's regard towards him and other persons; the which is clearly discovered by God, or merely dependeth on his will and providence.

The advantages which one man hath above another being

estimated morally, in reference to solid felicity and content, are indeed none; or are not absolutely made by God, but framed by men unto themselves. For,

God is indifferently affected toward persons as such, nakedly and privately considered; or as divested of moral conditions, qualifications, and actions: he in his dealing, whether as benefactor or judge, purely considereth the reason and exigency of things, the intrinsic worth of persons, the real merits of each cause; he maketh no arbitrary or groundless discriminations; he neither loveth and favoreth, nor loatheth and discountenanceth any person unaccountably: he doth utterly disclaim partiality, or respect of persons, as a calumnious aspersion on him, and a scandal to his providence.

Such in holy Scriptures he representeth himself, on various occasions; declaring his perfect impartiality, and that nothing beside the right and reason of cases doth sway with him; all other considerations being impertinent and insignificant to him. For instance,

It is declared that he hath no partial respect to nations; for the piety of Job, an Edomite; of Melchisedeck, a Canaanite; of Jethro, a Midianite; were very pleasing to him: he favorably did hear the prayers and accept the alms of Cornelius, a Roman soldier; whereon St. Peter made this general reflection: 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.'

He is declared not to regard the external profession of true religion, but real practice according to it: 'He rendereth,' saith St. Paul, 'to every man according to his deeds—tribulation and anguish on every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for,' addeth the Apostle, assigning the reason of this proceeding, 'there is no respect of persons with God.'

He is said not 'to respect faces' or any exterior appearances, however specious in the eye of the world; according to that saying of God to Samuel, at the choice of David before his brethren; 'Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not

as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the heart.'

It is expressed that he hath no respect to the outward estate or worldly rank and dignity of men; but that princes and peasants, masters and servants, the honorable or wealthy, and the mean or poor, are of equal consideration with him; 'He,' saith Job, 'accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands;' and St. Paul biddeth masters to deal fairly with their servants, 'knowing,' saith he, 'that your Master is also in heaven;' 'neither is there respect of persons with him.'

We are taught that he doth not regard even the most sacred offices, or more worthy accomplishments of men, in prejudice to the verity of things, or equity of the case; for hence St. Paul maintaineth his resolute behavior toward those great pillars of religion, St. Peter and St. James; 'Of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person.'

It is frequently inculcated that he hath no consideration of any gifts, of sacrifices, of services presented to him with sinister intent, to compound for sin, or excuse from duty, to pervert justice, or palliate wrong; according to that [declaration of Moses, 'The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward;' and that] charge of king Jehoshaphat to his judges, 'Let the fear of the Lord be on you; take heed, and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.' And, 'Do not think,' saith the Hebrew wise man, 'to corrupt (him) with gifts; for such he will not receive; and trust not to unrighteous sacrifices; for the Lord is judge, and with him is no respect of persons.'

In fine, it is often generally declared that God impartially dispenseth recompenses, in just proportion, according to the deeds of men: 'He,' saith St. Paul, 'that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons:' 'And if,' saith St. Peter, 'ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to

every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.'

There is nothing more frequently asserted, or more seriously urged in holy Scripture, than this point, that God will judge and deal with men, not according to his absolute, antecedent affections, but 'according to their own works,' or the tenor of their practice, duly scanned and estimated by the rules of justice; so that the really better man will certainly prove the happier, and the worse man shall be the more wretched: 'He will reward every man,' saith our Lord, κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ, 'according to his practice:' 'Every one,' saith St. Paul, 'shall receive the things done in his body, πρὸς τὰ ἔργα, suitably (in just proportion) to his works;' and 'each man shall receive ἴδιον μισθὸν, his own wages according to his own labor; and then praise (or a due taxation) shall be to every man from God:' 'Behold,' saith he in the Revelation, 'I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to recompense each man ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔργον ἔσται, as his work shall be.'

Wherefore by sacred testimonies it is abundantly manifest that impartiality is a divine attribute and perfection of God; the which (for our greater satisfaction, and farther illustration of the point) may be also evinced by divers arguments, some proving that it must be so, others showing that it is so; some inferring it *a priori*, from the prime, most avowed attributes of God's nature, and from his relations to men; others arguing it *a posteriori*, from principal instances of God's proceedings and providential dispensations toward men.

Of the first sort are these:

1. God is impartial, because he is perfectly wise, and thence doth truly estimate persons and things.

Wisdom doth look evenly, with a free and pure (an indifferent and uncorrupt) eye on all things; apprehending and esteeming each as it is in itself; making no distinction where it findeth none; not preferring one thing before another, without ground of difference in them. It doth not fix a valuation on its objects, but acknowlegeth it, and taketh it for such as it is in themselves.

Wherefore God cannot have any blind affection or fondness toward any person grounded on no reason, or on any unac-

countable prejudice. No person can seem amiable or odious to him, who is not in himself truly such.

This argument is often used in Scripture; and to assure us of this truth, it is there frequently affirmed that God doth search the hearts, doth try the spirits, doth weigh the actions of men: 'The Lord,' said Hannah, 'is a God of knowlege, and by him actions are weighed:' 'All the ways of man,' saith Solomon, 'are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits:' 'His eyes,' saith the psalmist, 'behold, his eyelids try the children of men:' And, 'O Lord of hosts,' saith Jeremiah, 'that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart—Thine eyes are open on all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:' ['I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.']

2. God cannot be partial, because he is perfectly righteous, just, and holy. This reason adjoined to the former doth make up a complete demonstration: for partiality doth proceed either from blindness of mind, or from perverseness of will, he therefore who hath both an exact knowlege of things, and a perfect rectitude of will, can nowise be partial; the one enabling him to judge, the other disposing him to affect things as they are and deserve; to esteem and love that which is indeed worthy and lovely; to despise and dislike that which is despicable and odious; to have no opinion or affection toward a person, abstracted from all qualifications; such an one being no special object of a wise and just either esteem or contempt, love or hatred.

As these causes are always inseparably connected, (for what is justness, but a disposition of will to follow, without deflexion, the dictates of wisdom?) so the effect must necessarily follow; according to numberless testimonies in Scripture, importing that 'The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth:' 'The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous—but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.'

3. God is impartial, because he is infinitely great and potent; whence all creatures are in the same degree inferior, at the same

distance remote from him; all are equally at his discretion and disposal; he hath no need of any: what therefore should incline him to regard one before another, excepting only goodness, wherein he delighteth? So the wise man discourseth, 'He that is Lord of all shall fear no man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness; for he hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike.' So Moses did imply, 'The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons.'

4. God is impartial, because he is immensely good and benign; both intensively in the degree, and extensively as to the objects of his goodness; so that he favoreth all equally, because all thoroughly, so far as may well be according to their condition and capacity; whence if there be any difference or defect, the ground thereof is not in his nature or will, but in the different qualifications of creatures.

There is a double goodness or love of God; one absolute, preceding all regard to personal qualities or deeds; the other conditionate, and consequent on special regards: in both these God is impartial; for the first is general and unconfined, according to that of the psalmist, 'The Lord is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works;' and those sayings in the gospel, 'He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil:' 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' The second is grounded on special reasons of the case, and adapted to the rules of justice demanding it; according whereto, 'The Lord is rich (in mercy) toward all that call on him.' 'He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, and preserveth all them that love him.'

In the first there is no difference; in the second the difference is made by ourselves, being founded in our voluntary demeanor.

5. God is impartial toward all persons, because he hath the same (natural and original) relations toward all.

1. He is the Maker and Father of all; according to that of the prophet, 'Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?' and that of the Apostle, there is 'one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all:' he therefore hath the same parental kindness toward all,

the same tenderness for the good of each; he is not capable of that imperfection which is observable in some parents, to be fond and indulgent to some children above others; but in his affection 'the rich and poor,' as the wise man saith, 'do meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.'

Hence Job did collect that 'God accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for,' saith he, 'they are all the work of his hands.'

Hence the same holy man did infer that he was obliged to deal fairly with his own servants, for that God in judgment would consider their case no less than his, on this account, for, 'Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?'

Hence the wise man, who imitated Solomon, did argue an equality of gracious providence toward all; 'He hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike.'

2. God is the common Lord of all; and therefore is concerned to protect all with the like care, to govern all with the same equity.

Hence St. Paul gathereth that God is indifferently willing to show mercy and dispense blessings to all people; to confer the means of salvation, and to accept pious endeavors, without distinction of Jew or Gentile: 'Is he,' saith he, 'the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles?' And 'There is therefore no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call on him.'

Hence the same Apostle doth urge masters to be just and kind to their servants; for that God, as the common master, hath an equal respect to both; 'knowing that your Master also is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.'

3. God is 'the Saviour of all;' desiring and designing that 'all men should be saved, and come to the knowlege of the truth;' being 'willing that no man should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

Wherefore out of philanthropy and love to mankind he sent his Son to be 'the Saviour of the world;' to 'give himself a ransom for all men,' to 'taste death for every man.'

And what greater instance could there be of perfect impartiality?

So by reasons from the principal attributes and relations of God his impartiality may be deduced: the same also may be declared from his proceedings and dealings with men. For,

1. God hath proposed to all men indifferently the same terms and conditions of obtaining his love and favor, of enjoying his bounty and mercy, of obtaining rewards and felicity from him.

The same laws and rules of life are prescribed to all persons, as men and as Christians.

The natural dictates of reason, the precepts of holy Scripture, the great moral duties of religion, by observance whereof God's favor is retained, and salvation assured, are of general concern and common obligation to all without exception.

God hath not framed one law, or one gospel, for princes and great men, another for peasants and mean artisans; he hath not chalked out one way toward heaven for the rich, another for the poor to walk in; but all, 'high and low, rich and poor, one with another,' are tied to observe the precepts of piety, of charity, of justice, of temperance, sobriety and chastity, of modesty, humility, and patience; none, great or small, can otherwise, than by proceeding in the common road of virtuous practice, arrive to happiness. 'He that doeth the will of my Father that is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments:' 'Enter in through the strait gate:' 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life:' 'To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek glory and honor and immortality, eternal life' will be conferred: these are the grand infallible maxims, the fixed irreversible decrees, expressing the general duty and doom of mankind, according to the eternal reason of things, and the declared will of God Almighty, our sovereign governor and judge.

Whoever it is that will please God, that will have his love, that will be happy by his grace, must humbly submit to God's

will, must faithfully obey God's laws, must carefully walk in God's way; from this course there can be no exemption, no dispensation, no special privilege for any person whatever.

As all men naturally, by indissoluble bands of obligation, are the subjects and servants of God; so God indispensably and inexcusably doth require the same loyalty and fidelity, the same diligence, the same reverence from all.

Great men sometimes may live as if they conceived themselves free from the obligations which bind other men; as if they had not souls (as we poor mortals have) to be saved, or were to be saved in some other way; as if obedience to the divine laws doth not touch them, but only doth belong to the commonalty; as if they had special indulgence to live in pride, luxury, and sloth, might warrantably practise injustice, oppression, revenge; might *cum privilegio* be lewd and lascivious, withhold their debts, take God's name in vain, neglect devotion and the service of God: but in thus doing they much abuse themselves; for they no less than others are obnoxious to guilt and to punishment, for such misdemeanors against the divine laws. In truth, if there be any difference in the case, it is only this; that they, in all equity, ingenuity, and gratitude, are obliged to a more strict, more faithful, more diligent observance of God's laws; they being more indebted to God for his special bounty to them; they having larger talents and advantages committed to their trust, their deportment being of higher consequence, and most influential on the world, they being liable to render an account according to that just rule, 'Unto whom much is given, of him much shall be required;' whence their eminency of condition doth not excuse them from common duties, but doth advance their obligation, will aggravate their neglect, will inflame their reckoning, will plunge them deeper into woful punishment; according to that of the wise man, 'A sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places: for mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men shall be mightily tormented.'

2. All persons have the same means, the same aids, the same supports afforded to them, for ability to perform their duty, and attain their happiness.

The word of God, as the light of heaven, doth indifferently

shine to all men, for instructing their minds, for directing their practice, for 'guiding their feet in the way of peace.'

The divine grace is ever at hand, ready to assist all those who sincerely and seriously do apply themselves to serve God.

Seasonable comforts are never wanting to support those who need them, and who in their distress seek them from God, who 'healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds;' so that when 'the poor man crieth, the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of his troubles.'

The universal good Spirit of God (the fountain of light and wisdom, of spiritual power and strength, of consolation and joy) is communicated according to the needs of men, and exigences of occasion; preventing them by direction to the right way, by reclaiming them from ill courses, by exciting in them good thoughts and good desires; quickening their good resolutions, and assisting in the pursuit of them; enabling them to resist temptations, and to combat with their spiritual adversaries: to such best purposes the holy Spirit is given to all in needful seasons and measures; especially to those who do earnestly seek it, do faithfully use it, do treat it well.

3. God hath provided, and doth propose to all men the same encouragements for obedience, the same punishments for transgression; the which being the same in kind do only differ in degree, proportionably to the good deeds or bad demerits of persons.

God hath appointed one heaven for all pious and virtuous persons, of what nation, of what rank, of what condition soever they are; he hath 'prepared those things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, for all that love him.' For 'all that have fought the good fight, and kept the faith, and love his appearance, the Lord, the righteous Judge, hath laid up a crown of righteousness.'

Immortality of life, an unfading crown of glory, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, unspeakable joys, endless bliss, God hath covenanted and promised to all his faithful servants; to all who in his way please to accept and embrace them; ὁ θέλων, 'He that willeth, let him take of the water of life freely:' and what greater rewards could there be assigned? What room is there for partiality, where all are capable of the same equally

great, because in a manner immense felicity? 'Many,' saith our Saviour, 'shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.'

Lazarus, the poor beggar, shall rest with the illustrious Moses, and the noble Daniel, with David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and all pious princes, in the bosom of Abraham. The poor fishermen, the painful tent-makers, the sorry publicans, shall reign together with Constantine, and Theodosius, and all those good princes, who have faithfully served God, and promoted his glory. The rich, well using their wealth, may obtain that state, 'treasuring up to themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life:' the poor, contentedly bearing their condition, have a good title thereto, expressed in those words, 'Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.'

On the other hand, the same dismal punishments are threatened to all presumptuous, contumacious, and impenitent transgressors of God's law, however dignified or distinguished; be they princes or subjects, noble or base, wealthy or indigent; the same unquenchable fire, the same gnawing worm, the same weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; the same utter darkness; the same burning lake of brimstone; the same extreme disconsolate anguish is reserved for them all: 'Depart from me;' 'Go ye cursed into everlasting fire,' will be the doom pronounced on 'all the workers of iniquity;' 'Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be on every soul that doeth evil.'

No regard will be had to the quality of men in this world; for 'the rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day,' was not excused from hell and torment: there is a 'Tophet ordained of old, even for kings:' 'mighty men shall be mightily tormented,' if they have mightily sinned.

Even present encouragements of virtue in this life, the joys and comforts of God's holy Spirit, the sweet elapses of spiritual consolation in devotion, 'the peace of God,' and delicious sense of his love, the cheerful satisfaction of a good conscience,

the joy in believing God's truth, and hoping for accomplishment of his promises, the delight in obeying God's commandments, the blessing of God on good undertakings, and happy success therein, the 'co-operation of all things for good to them who love God,' the supply of all wants, and satisfaction of all desires, the experimental assurance of God's constant protection and gracious providence over those who fear him and trust in him, (according to numberless declarations and promises in holy Scripture,) are indifferently dispensed to all, who shall use the means to attain them, in way of conscientious practice.

As correspondently the temporal discouragements from sin (crosses, disappointments, vexations, miseries) are without exception allotted to all transgressors of God's law, according to many denunciations therein.

4. The impartiality of God doth appear from his universal providence, carefully watching over all and every person, dispensing good things to each, according to his need, without distinction.

Is any man in extreme want? his liberal hand presently doth reach forth a supply; for, 'He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness;' 'He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.'

Is any man in distress? the Lord is ready to afford relief; according to that repeated burden of the 107th Psalm: 'Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.'

Is any man engaged in sin and guilt? He is patient and longsuffering; not pouring forth his anger, not withholding his mercies; letting his sun arise and his showers descend on the most unworthy and ungrateful: this he doth so generally, that commonly by apparent events it is not easily discernible to whom God beareth special favor; according to that observation of the preacher, 'No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them; all things coming alike to all.' How then can any man complain of partiality in him, who exerciseth so unconfined bounty, clemency, and patience?

If there be any considerable difference, it is only this, that God hath a peculiar care of the poor, the afflicted, the oppressed, the helpless and disconsolate, who do most need (and

thence are most induced to seek) his succor and comfort; being also commonly better qualified to receive them; as is frequently declared in Scripture.

It is true that God hath his particular friends, his favorites, his privados, whom he doth specially regard and countenance; on whom he conferreth extraordinary boons and graces; namely, those who do love, who do fear, who do trust in, who do honor him, who do obey him; concerning whom it is said, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God:' and, 'The Lord preserveth all those that love him:' 'There is no want to them that fear him:' 'He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them:' 'The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate:' 'Them that honor me, I will honor:' 'The Lord loveth the righteous:' 'The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry:' 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.'

But evidently there is no partiality in this; for he doth not favor them irrespectively as persons, but as in justice specially qualified for favor; friendship, dutifulness, reverence toward him, being the highest virtues, and arguing a mind endued with dispositions (with equity, with ingenuity, with gratitude, with sober wisdom, with love of truth and goodness) which demand a correspondence of love and respect from God himself. And as we do not hold a man partial, who beareth a special affection and regard to those who express good-will, who deal kindly and fairly with them, who serve them faithfully, and pay them due respect; so neither is God partial, if he doth specially bless good men on the like accounts.

Especially considering that God doth not so favor mere pretenders, who profess to love and honor him, but do not love true goodness; fond, superstitions, hypocritical people, who call, Lord, Lord, but practise iniquity; who think to please him by affected services; who court and flatter him with their lips; who would bribe him with their gifts and sacrifices.

5. All Christians, without distinction, have the same illustrious relations and honorable privileges, the most great and glorious that can be imagined.

Of what greater honor is a man capable than to be adopted into the blood royal of heaven, to be called to be one of the sons of God? 'Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' 'God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, that he might redeem us'—and 'that we might receive the adoption of sons.'

Ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην' 'Behold,' saith St. John, 'what love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the sons of God.' This is a privilege which God hath given, which Christ hath purchased for us all. And whosoever received him, he gave them ἐξουσίαν ταύτην, (this power, this privilege, this advantage,) 'that they should become the sons of God.'

To what higher dignity can any one pretend, than to be heir of a kingdom, by the most infallible assurance that can be; by covenant, by promise of God? Such are all good Christians, God's children; for 'if sons, then heirs,' saith the Apostle, 'heirs of God, coheirs with Christ:' heirs of God's kingdom; for, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren,' saith St. James; 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?'

'Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.'

'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.'

'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.'

To what higher pitch can the most ambitious soul aspire, than to be a king?

Such, St. John saith, that our Lord hath constituted every good Christian; 'partakers,' not of a carnal, an earthly, a temporal kingdom, (which is unstable, is subject to various chances and crosses, cannot endure long, or last any considerable time,) but of a spiritual, a celestial, an eternal kingdom, 'which cannot be shaken;' which hath continual rest, peace, joy.

We are by God called unto his kingdom and glory, 'translated into the kingdom of his own dear Son.'

To be the brethren of Christ; who is the sovereign 'Lord of glory, King of kings, and Lord of lords.'

Is it not a considerable honor to be the friends of our Lord?

So is every poor soul, which hath the conscience to serve him faithfully; for, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.'

All are citizens, free denizens of the heavenly commonwealth; *συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων*——.

6. All men are liable to the same judgment, at the same tribunal, before that one impartial, inflexible judge, who cannot be corrupted with gifts, or dazzled with shows, or moved by any sinister regards.

All persons must stand before that bar on equal ground; without any advantage; according to that representation of St. John; 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened—and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'

The greatest monarchs, the mightiest potentates, the most redoubtable warriors, and successful conquerors, (the 'men who made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms,') 'that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof;' who affected 'to ascend into heaven, and to exalt his throne above the stars of God, to ascend above the heights of the clouds, and to be like the Most High.'

There shall they stand bare and divested of all their phantastry; their splendid pomp, their numerous retinue, their guards, their parasites.

No consideration there will be had of their windy titles, of their gay attire, and glittering pomp.

No respect will be had to the dread of their name, to the fame of their prowess; to that spurious glory, for which they unsettled mankind, and overturned the world; their actions will be strictly scanned according to the rules of God's law and common equity.

They will be put to answer for all the violences and outrages, for all the spoils and rapines, for all the blood and slaughters, for all the ruins, devastations, and desolations, their cruel ambition hath caused; for all the sins they have committed, and all the mischiefs they have done.

They who now have so many flatterers and adorers, will not then find one advocate to plead for them.

Thus it may appear that God is impartial.

But there are divers obvious exceptions against this doctrine. As,

Obj. 1. Is it not apparent that the gifts of God are distributed with great inequality?

Doth not one swim in wealth and plenty, while another coucheth under the burden of extreme want and penury?

Are not some perched aloft in high dignity, while others crawl on the ground, and grovel in despicable meanness?

Are not some 'clothed with purple and fine linen, and fare deliciously every day;' while others scarce find rags to cover them, and lie at the door begging for relief?

Do not some thrive and prosper in their affairs, while others are disappointed and crossed in their undertakings?

Was it not truly observed of some persons, (and those least deserving good fortune,) 'They are inclosed in their own fat'—'Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish?'

And whence doth this difference come, but from God's hand? 'Who,' as the Apostle asketh, 'maketh thee to differ' from another, but God, the disposer of all things?

To this exception I answer:

1. That temporal things are so inconsiderable, that they scarce deserve to come into the balance, or to be computed; for they have but the same proportion to spiritual things, as time hath to eternity; or a finite to an infinite; which is none at all.

What partiality therefore is there, if God in mercy and patience bestow on bad men a farthing in the temporal consolations of this life, (if the universal Father give a small portion in this life to untoward children,) while he reserveth infinite millions for his obedient children?

2. The goods of fortune commonly are dispensed not by a special hand of God, but according to the general course of providence: and what partiality is he guilty of, who scattereth money into a crowd of poor people; although in scrambling some get more than other; and often the worst (being most bold and fierce) do get most?

3. Indeed the receiving those gifts is no sign of God's special regard; as the preacher well observed; 'No man knoweth

either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.'

4. God, as St. Austin saith, purposely doth sparingly deal these things to good men, and freely bestoweth them on bad men, to show how little we ought to value them; how much inferior they are to spiritual goods. For surely he would give the best things to his friends, and the worst to his enemies.

5. Even temporal gifts are dispensed with a very even hand; for if, barring injudicious fancy and vulgar opinion, we rightly prize things, we compare the conveniences and inconveniences of each state, it will be hard to judge which hath the advantage.

Wealth hath more advantages for pleasure; but it hath also more cares, more fears, more crosses, more dangers, more troubles, more temptations.

It hath more plenty; but withal it hath less safety, less ease, less liberty, less quiet, less real enjoyment.

Set the distraction of the rich man's mind against the toil of the poorest man's body; the nauseous surfeits of one against the griping hunger of the other.

That which really doth constitute a state happy, content, may be common to both, or wanting to either, as the person is disposed.

6. The goods of fortune are not purely gifts, but talents deposited in trust for God's service, for which a proportionable return is expected; so that he that hath less of them, hath a less burden to bear, and an easier account to render.

7. Many gifts are not dispensed with personal regard, but for public good; and therefore all have an interest in them.

The wealth, the power, the reputation, the prosperity of a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, are not his, but his neighbor's; for governing, for protecting, for encouraging, for assisting whom, they are conferred: the world not being able to subsist in order and peace without subordinate ranks, and without answerable means to maintain them.

Obj. 2. It is apparent that God dispenseth his grace, the light of knowlege, and means of salvation, very unequally; some nations living in the clear sunshine of the gospel, while others

'sit in darkness and the shadow of death;' whole nations being detained in barbarous and brutish ignorance.

To answer this exception fully would require much discourse; it being a dark and difficult point: but briefly we may say,

1. That God dispenseth measures of grace according to a just, yet inscrutable wisdom, knowing what use will be made thereof, and what fruit men will bear. It may therefore be a favor not to dispense light to them, who are not prepared to embrace and improve it well.

2. No man can tell what God doth in preparation, and what obstructions are made by men to his grace.

3. As lower means of grace are conferred, so proportionably less returns are expected.

4. How hard soever it may be to descry the reason of God's proceedings in this case, yet assuredly it is just; and our ignorance of it should not prejudice the belief of those general truths, which are so plainly declared, concerning the universal benignity and impartial equity of God.

Obj. 3. Is it not in holy Scripture sometimes asserted that God doth act arbitrariously and absolutely; dispensing his bounty and mercy without regard to any quality in men, or deed committed by them, either in whole, or in proportion—God saith, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy'—and, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?'

Is not a plain instance of this dealing alleged by St. Paul concerning Jacob and Esau, that 'before the children were born, or had done either good or evil,' God said, 'The elder shall serve the younger;' and in regard thereto, in the prophet, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated?'

We answer briefly, that

Such expressions do import, not that God acteth absolutely in the thing itself, but *quoad nos;* not that he acteth without reason, but on reasons (transcending our capacity, or our means to know it) incomprehensible or undiscernible to us; not that he can give no account, but is not obliged to render any to us; that the methods of his providence commonly are inscrutable; that his proceedings are not subject to our examina-

tion and censure; that his acting doth sufficiently authorise and justify itself; that it is high presumption and arrogance for us to scan, sift, or contest, or cavil at the equity or wisdom of God's acting.

That God doth not act according to necessity, but is free in dispensing his mercy, and applying it to any person, so that they have nothing to challenge on account of their own deserts or works; but must refer all to his mere bounty.

However, there can be nothing in these mysteries of predestination and providence, which really doth subvert an assertion so often clearly expressed, and so well grounded in reason, or the consideration of God's nature, attributes, ordinary way of acting, &c.

Whatever expressions are repugnant thereto in sound, whatever instances (depending on occult causes) in appearance do cross it; it yet must stand, that God is impartially merciful, benign, just, &c.

Obj. 4. Had not Jeremy, St. John Baptist, St. Paul, absolute favors and graces conferred on them, who were sanctified, and separated from the womb to be prophets and apostles?

Resp. These favors were in design not so much particular and personal, as general and public; those persons being raised up by God on occasions as needful instruments (elect vessels) of his providence, to instruct men, and to reduce them to God; so that God, in raising up such extraordinary persons, did express his common goodness to mankind.

The like may be said of that special favor which was vouchsafed to the holy Virgin, who was κεχαριτωμένη, and 'blessed among women,' for the general good of mankind.

The consideration of this point is very useful, and may dispose us to many sorts of good practice.

1. No man should presume on God's dealing with him more favorably than with others, as if he were a darling, or favorite; that God will indulge him in the commission of any thing prohibited, or in omission of any duty.

No man should indulge himself in any thing on a conceit that God will indulge him, or oversee his errors; and that in this sense, 'He seeth not iniquity in Jacob.'

2. No man should be puffed up with conceit, that God hath a singular regard to him. For all such conceits are groundless and vain; in them men do miserably delude themselves.

No man can otherwise found any assurance of God's special love to him, than on a good conscience; testifying that he doth sincerely love God, and endeavor faithfully to obey his commandments.

3. No man should despair of God's favor; seeing God hath no particular aversation from any; but every person hath the same grounds of hope.

If we can buckle our hearts to observe our duty, we may be sure to be accepted.

'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?'

4. No man should be discouraged for his condition or fortune; since in allotting it to him God had no disfavor, nor did intend him ill.

God hath no less regard to him, than to persons of the most high, wealthy, prosperous state.

5. No man should repine, murmur, or complain of God's dealing, as if he were unkindly used, more than others: for there is no such thing. God dealeth alike kindly with all.

6. No man on account of his rank, wealth, or worldly advantages, should boast or pride himself; seeing thence he partaketh no more than his meanest and poorest neighbor, of the principal advantage, God's favor.

7. No man, on such accounts, should despise his neighbor, 'the brother of low degree:' for on these accounts it appeareth, that the wise man saith truly, that 'He is void of wisdom who despiseth his neighbor;' seeing no man can be despicable, whom God regardeth; seeing 'God,' as Elihu saith, 'is mighty, and despiseth not any;' seeing the meanest person standeth on equal terms with the greatest in the eye of God.

8. Great men should not take themselves for another sort of creatures, or another race of men than their poor neighbors; that the world is theirs, and all things are for them; that they may do what they please; that they are exempted from laws, which oblige others; for in moral and spiritual accounts they are on a level with others.

They are but fellow-subjects and fellow-servants with others; all accountable to the same master.

9. Superiors hence should be moved to deal fairly, gently, and courteously with inferiors; seeing these are their fellow-servants, equally considerable as themselves with the great Master of the family.

This is the use, to which St. Paul applieth the consideration:

'Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye have a Master in heaven'—— 'Ye masters, do the same things unto them, (that is, be conscientiously good to them, as they are faithful to you,) forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.'

10. This consideration should preserve us from superstition, or thinking to please or satisfy God, win his favor, or appease his displeasure, by uncouth ways, which he hath not prescribed to all men; to corrupt him by our sacrifices and oblations; our flatteries, glozings, colloguings with him; so that he will indulge us in any bad thing, or excuse us from our true duty, in regard to those affected services.

We do herein but abuse ourselves; for he will not approve or accept us on any other account, than of discharging our duty, being truly righteous and good.

11. It is matter of comfort and satisfaction to a man who is conscious of his sincerity, that (whatever his condition and circumstances be) God will have a fair regard thereto, and will not reject him.

It was so to Job; 'Doth not God see my ways, and count all my steps?——Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity.'

12. The consideration of this point should keep us from partial respects of men.

Not to admire the state of great men, nor to yield them undue deferences, (in prejudice to meaner persons, making greater difference than there is ground for,) not to flatter or humor them in an immoderate measure or unbeseeming manner.

This is that which St. James doth urge in his second chapter, as a very unequal thing.

We should imitate God; we should consider that our opinions and affections should resemble his.

As in exterior judgment no respect is to be had to the rich above the poor; so neither in the interior judgment or esteem of our mind; to which St. James seemeth to apply the law; 'If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.'

13. This should keep us from envying at those who have more worldly advantages.

14. It should keep us from being offended or scandalised, or perverted into false notions of God, on occasion of any mysterious points, or hard expressions importing absolute and arbitrary proceedings of God, in predestination or providence. For however they are to be understood, they cannot derogate from the impartial goodness and justice of God.

15. This consideration should engage us readily to pay due respect and reverence to princes, to magistrates, to all our superiors.

For hence we see that the reason why we are commanded to honor and fear them, is not their worldly grandeur of wealth or power, (things of small consideration with God;) but it standeth on a more solid ground, their sacred relations to God, as his representatives and officers; who in his name and behalf do administer justice, and protect right and innocence, encourage virtue, maintain order and peace in the world.

Though God doth not favor their persons as rich and mighty; yet he regardeth his own character imprinted on them; he regardeth his honor and interest concerned in their respect; he regardeth the public good of mankind, which they are constituted to promote: he considers them as the 'ministers of his kingdom,' and instruments of conveying his benefits to mankind.

Whence he 'giveth salvation to kings;' he by his law and by his providence doth guard and secure them from violence, from contempt, from disrespect.

In honoring them, we honor the authority of God, and the character of divinity stamped on them; we serve ourselves, for whose sake they are constituted, for whose good they watch.

It may also engage us the more gladly and fully to yield them their due respect, to consider that their condition is not invidious, or their case better than other men's; seeing they are

accountable to God for the advantages of it; seeing that God hath no regard to them on account of that greatness which dazzleth our eyes; seeing that for all the burdens they sustain, for all the cares they take, for all the pains they endure, for our good and public service, they can receive so inconsiderable a recompense from us.

Finally, it should engage us to be very careful of our ways, and diligent in our obedience; seeing there is no other way possible of pleasing God, of gaining his favor and friendship, of appeasing his displeasure, of standing upright, and coming off well in his judgment; this is St. Peter's inference, with which I conclude.

'If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXXI.

I TIMOTHY, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 10.

THERE are two points of doctrine here asserted: one, that God is the Saviour of all men; another, that he is peculiarly the Saviour of the faithful.

God in many respects may truly be conceived and called the *Saviour of all men*; for the word *save*, largely accepted, denotes the conferring any kind of good: he is so as the universal preserver and upholder of all things; &c. But that he is in this place termed such in a higher sense, may from several considerations appear.

1. For that according to apostolical use, the words *Saviour*, *save*, *salvation*, are wont to bear an evangelical sense, as referring to the benefits purchased and dispensed by our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. For that questionless St. Paul here intends God to be the *Saviour* of the faithful in this higher sense, and consequently he means him in the same sense, though not in the same degree and to the same effect, a *Saviour of all men*.

3. Because it is plain that in other places of Scripture parallel to this, such a sense is designed: instances quoted.

4. Because according to the tenor of Scripture, and the analogy of Christian doctrine, St. Paul's assertion, thus interpreted, is true; as will be shown.

5. It might be added that the *living God* in the text may well be understood of our Lord Jesus himself; not only as partaking of the divine nature, but as exhibited in the gospel,

God our Saviour, &c. Reasons for this: immediate testimonies.

1. Jesus is called the *Saviour* of the world; who came for that purpose; whose chief performances were designed and directed to the salvation of the world: instances quoted: in all which places it is plain that the world means men of all sorts and qualities.

2. The object of our Saviour's undertakings and intentions is described by qualities and circumstances agreeing unto all men. *The Son of man came to save that which was lost;* and all were lost: &c.

3. We have other terms applied to him as general and comprehensive as possible: *God our Saviour* would have all *men to be saved;* &c.

4. Farther to exclude any limitation of general terms, it is expressed that our Saviour's undertakings respected even those who by their own default might lose the benefit of them; for it was said of some, that *they denied the Lord who bought them:* &c.

5. The supposition thereof is the ground of duty, and an aggravation of sin.

Other reasons given to confirm the same.

1. The impulsive cause which moved God to design the sending our Lord to undertake what he did, is expressed to be philanthropy, or love to mankind, not only particular fondness or affection: this shown.

2. God declares himself impartial, most particularly in this case: instances given.

3. We may observe that the undertakings and performances of *our Lord* are for nature and extent compared with those of Adam, who *was a type of him that was to come:* this enlarged on.

4. Our Saviour, by assuming our nature, and partaking of

our flesh, *being made in the likeness of men*, did thereby ally himself to the whole human race : this point dilated on.

5. We are taught that our Lord by his *saving* performances acquired a rightful property in, and a title of dominion over all men living : this shown.

6. We are commanded to *pray*, *intercede*, and *give thanks* for *all men*, even heathens and persecutors, as for objects of God's benevolence, whom *he would have to be saved*, &c.

7. For which practice we have the pattern of our Lord himself.

8. It is not easy to conceive how we can thus pray for ourselves or others, without supposing Christ to be *our* Saviour and *theirs ;* &c.

9. Either our Saviour's performances do respect all men, or some men (the far greater part) do stand on no other terms than those of the first creation, or rather of the subsequent fall and condemnation ; being subject to a very rigorous law, certain guilt, and inevitable punishment. This contradicted in various parts of Scripture : instances quoted. Neither are the dealings and declarations of God towards those who lived under the law and prophets, impertinent to this purpose : this enlarged on. Nor was mankind ever left destitute of that divine grace which never denied itself to any ages : this topic enlarged on.

10. If our Lord be the *Saviour* of all those to whom God's truth is declared, and his mercy offered ; or if he be the *Saviour* of all the members of the visible church, particularly of those among them who, rejecting the overtures and means of grace, or by disobedience abusing them, shall in the event fail of being saved, then is he the *Saviour* of all men : this point enlarged on to the end.

SERMON LXXI.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

I TIMOTHY, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 10.

—— The living God; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.

THERE are two points of doctrine here plainly asserted by St. Paul, which I shall endeavor to explain and to apply: one, that God is the Saviour of all men; another, that he is peculiarly the Saviour of the faithful. For the first,

God in many respects may truly be conceived and called 'the Saviour of all men;' for the word 'save' doth in a large acception denote the conferring any kind of good; as implying a removal of need, or indigence. Whence God 'is the Saviour of all men,' as the universal preserver and upholder of all things in their being and natural state, as it is in the psalm: 'Thou, Lord, savest man and beast,' or, as the general benefactor, who 'is good to all, and whose mercies are over all his works;' who 'maketh his sun to rise on the good and bad, rains on the just and unjust, is kind and benign even to the ungrateful and evil:' or, as the common assistant, protector, and deliverer of all men, who in need or distress have recourse unto him for succor and relief, according to what is said in the psalms; 'The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.' The Lord is nigh unto all them that call on him.' 'They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.'

In these kinds of senses, especially respecting natural and temporal good, it is manifest that 'God is the Saviour of all men.' But that he is in this place termed such in a higher sense, with regard to mercies and blessings of a more excellent kind, and greater consequence, (to mercies and blessings of a spiritual nature, and relating to the eternal state of men,) may from several considerations appear.

1. For that according to apostolical use, the words 'Saviour,' 'save,' 'salvation,' are wont to bear an evangelical sense, relating to the benefits by our Lord Jesus Christ procured, purchased, and dispensed, concerning the future state of men.

2. For that questionless St. Paul doth here intend God to be Saviour of the faithful in this higher sense, and consequently he means him in the same sense (although not in the same degree and measure, or not altogether to the same effects and purposes) a 'Saviour of all men.'

3. Because it is plain that in other places of Scripture, like and parallel to this, such a sense is designed. As where, in this very epistle, we are enjoined 'to pray for all men,' for this reason; 'For,' saith St. Paul, 'this is good and acceptable before God our Saviour, who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowlege (or acknowlegement) of the truth;' where σωτὴρ ἡμῶν, the 'Saviour of us,' seems to denote the Saviour of us as men, (that interpretation best suiting with the argument St. Paul useth,) however it is expressed that God is, according to desire or intention, the Saviour of all men, in reference to their spiritual and eternal advantage; as willing that all men should embrace the gospel; which is farther most evidently confirmed by the words immediately following; 1. 2. 5 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'

4. Because, according to the tenor of Scripture, and the analogy of Christian doctrine, St. Paul's assertion thus interpreted is true, as our subsequent discourse may declare.

5. I might add, that 'the living God' in our text may very well be understood and expounded to be our Lord Jesus himself; not only as partaking of the divine nature, but as exhibited in the gospel, the word incarnate, who as such may seem commonly by St. Paul to be styled, 'God our Saviour;' 'God

manifested in the flesh;' 'God, that purchased the church with his own blood;' 'Christ, who is over all, God blessed for evermore.' However it from the premises is sufficiently apparent that God's being 'the Saviour of all men' doth relate unto our Saviour Jesus his undertakings and performances for the salvation of all men; since God in a sense evangelical is no otherwise said to save, than in concurrence with what Jesus did undertake and perform; than as designing, ordering, accepting, prosecuting, and accomplishing our Lord's performances; Jesus being the conduit through which all evangelical mercies and blessings are from God conveyed and dispensed to mankind. So that God being 'the Saviour of mankind,' is either directly and immediately, or by equivalence and in consequence, the same with Jesus being 'the Saviour of all men.'

That our Lord Jesus is 'the Saviour of all men;' or that the most signal of his saving performances do in their nature and their design respect all men, as meant for, as conducing and tending to all men's salvation, yea and as in their own nature (supposing men's due and possible concurrence with them) effectually productive of their salvation; that, I say, this ancient catholic point of doctrine (the which we profess to believe, when with the church we say in the Nicene Creed -- 'Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven,' and the which particularly our church in its Catechism, in the Ministration of Baptism, and in the Communion, doth most evidently and expressly declare itself to embrace) is very true, many full and clear testimonies of Scripture do show, many reasons grounded on Scripture do prove; the which we shall first touch, and then further both illustrate and enforce the truth, by declaring on what accounts, or in what respects our Lord is the Saviour of all men; as also by an application to practice, declarative of its usefulness and subserviency to the purposes of piety. For immediate testimonies:

1. Jesus is called the Saviour of the world; who was sent and came into the world to save the world; whose chief performances were designed and directed to the salvation of the world; 'We have heard and known,' said the men of Samaria, 'that this is truly the Saviour of the world, the Christ.' 'We have seen and testified,' saith St. John, 'that the Father sent

the Son to be the Saviour of the world,' (that world, of which it is said, 'He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.') And, 'God sent his Son into the world, not to judge (or not to condemn) the world, but that the world by him should be saved,' (that world whereof a great part he in effect would both judge and condemn for unbelief and disobedience, he did come primarily on intent to save.) And 'The bread which I shall give is,' saith he, 'my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' And, 'Behold,' said the Baptist, 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' And, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their offences,' saith St. Paul, 'to the world,' which otherwise he expresseth by *τὰ πάντα*, 'by him to reconcile all things unto himself.' And, 'He is a propitiation not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world,' (the whole world, in contradistinction from all Christians, to whom St. John speaketh in that place of his catholic epistle; that *κόσμος ὅλος*, of which he saith in that same epistle, *κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται*, 'the whole world lieth in wickedness.') In all which places that the world according to its ordinary acception (and as every man would take it at first hearing) doth signify the whole community of mankind, comprehending men of all sorts and qualities, good and bad, believers and infidels, (not in a new, unusual sense, any special restrained world of some persons, particularly regarded or qualified,) will, I suppose, easily appear to him, who shall without prejudice or partiality attend to the common use thereof in Scripture, especially in St. John, who most frequently applieth it as to this, so to other cases or matters.

2. The object of our Saviour's undertakings and intentions is described by qualities and circumstances agreeing unto all men. All the sons of Adam are by disobedience in a lost condition, (lost in error and sin, lost in guilt and condemnation, lost in trouble and misery;) and, 'The Son of man,' saith he himself, 'came to save, *τὸ ἀπολωλὸς*, that which was lost,' (or whatever was lost.) 'All men have sinned,' saith St. Paul, 'and are fallen short of the glory of God;' and, 'It is a faithful saying,' saith the same Apostle, 'and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'

'God commended his love to us, that we being yet sinners Christ died for us.' All men naturally are weak and wicked; are in a state of alienation and enmity toward God: and, 'Even when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly:' 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son:' 'Christ once suffered for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous.' All men have souls and lives exposed to misery and ruin: and, 'The Son of man,' so he assures us, 'came not to destroy, but to save the souls (or lives) of men.' Those propositions in form, respecting an indefinite object, are according to vulgar use equipollent to those, wherein the object is expressed universally. However,

3. They are interpreted by others, expressed in terms as general and comprehensive as can be; such as these texts contain: 'The living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful,' (of all men universally, not only of the faithful, though chiefly of them.) 'God our Saviour would have all men to be saved;' 'He is the mediator of God and men, who gave himself a ransom for all men;' 'God hath shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy on all.' 'The love of Christ constraineth us, judging this, that if one died for all, then are all dead; and he died for all, that they who live may not live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.' 'The saving grace of God hath appeared to all men,' (or the grace of God, which is saving to all men, hath appeared, ἐπεφάνη ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.) 'He tasted death (ὑπὲρ παντὸς) for every man.' 'He is the true light, that enlighteneth every man coming into the world.' Which propositions do sufficiently determine the extent of our Saviour's saving performances.

4. Farther yet, to exclude any limitation or diminution of these so general terms, (at least to exclude any limitation in regard to all the members of the visible church, which are or have been incorporated thereinto,) it is expressed that our Saviour's undertakings did respect even those, who (by their own default) might lose the benefit of them, and who in effect should not be saved. For, of those false teachers, who introduced 'pernicious heresies,' it is said that 'they denied the Lord who bought them.' And St. Paul implies that by scan-

dalous example 'a weak brother, for whom Christ died,' being induced to sin, might be destroyed. 'And by thy knowlege shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?' And, 'Do not,' saith he again, 'by thy eating destroy him, for whom Christ died.' And the Apostle to the Hebrews signifies concerning apostates, that they do 'trample on the Son of God, and pollute the blood of Christ, by which they are sanctified.'

5. The supposition thereof is the ground of duty, and an aggravation of sin.

Thus doth the holy Scripture in terms very direct and express declare this truth, indeed so clearly and fully, that scarce any other point of Christian doctrine can allege more ample or plain testimony of Scripture for it; whence it is wonderful that any pretending reverence to Scripture should dare (on consequences of their own devising) to question it; and many reasons confirming the same may be deduced thence.

1. The impulsive cause, which moved God to design the sending our Lord for to undertake what he did, is expressed to be philanthropy, or love to mankind: 'But,' saith St. Paul, 'when the kindness and love of God our Saviour unto man appeared—according to his mercy he saved us.' 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.' 'God hereby commends his love unto us, that we as yet being sinners, Christ died for us.' It was not a particular fondness of affection, (such whereof no particular ground can be assigned or imagined,) but an universal (infinitely rich and abundant) goodness, mercy, and pity toward this eminent part of his creation, sunk into distress and lamentable wretchedness, which induced God to send his Son for the redemption of mankind.

2. God declares himself impartial (most particularly) in this case; that as all men in regard to him stand alike related, and are in the same condition, so he proceeds with indifferent affection, and on the same terms with all. He is equally the Lord and Maker of all men; and all men are equally involved in guilt and exposed to ruin; on which grounds St. Paul inferreth, that as to God's regard of man's salvation, there is no difference between Jews and Greeks; and by parity of reason there can be none between any other sorts of persons, antecedently to God's merciful intentions. 'There is,' saith he,

'no respect of persons with God,' (as to preparing the capacities and means, to propounding the terms and conditions of salvation, for about these he discourses;) for, 'Is he,' saith the Apostle, assigning the reason of that assertion, 'the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles? No: There is no difference,' saith he, 'of Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord of all, being rich (rich in mercy and bounty) unto all that call on him;' that is by consequence simply unto all; for St. Paul implies that God therefore provided that all men should have the means of calling on him imparted to them; for that, 'how should they call on him without faith?' and 'how should they believe without preachers?' and 'how should there be preachers, if they were not sent?' Whence he infers (against the sense of those Jews with whom he disputes) that it was necessary that the Apostles should have a commission to preach unto all. And, 'The righteousness of God by the faith of Christ is manifested unto all, and over all that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:' the relation of God is the same to all men, (He is the God and Lord of all;) the state and need of all men are the same; there is therefore no difference, excepting that consequent one, which compliance or non-compliance with the conditions offered unto all doth induce. It is true in this respect, what the wise man saith, ὁ πάντων δεσπότης ὁμοίως προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων· 'He,' that is Lord of all, 'careth (or provideth) for all alike;' and what Clemens Alexandrinus says, as to this particular, 'All things lie equally for all from God; so that no man can complain of him;'* as partial to some, and deficient to others.

3. We may observe that the undertakings and performances of our Lord are for nature and extent compared with those of Adam, (who was τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, 'a type of him that was to come;') as Adam, being a representative of mankind, did by his transgression involve all men in guilt, and subject them to condemnation; provoked God's wrath, and drew the effects thereof on us; brought all men under the slavery of sin,

* Strom. vii. p. 301.

and necessity of death; so was our Lord the proxy of mankind, and by his performances in our behalf did undo for our advantage, what the former did to our prejudice; by his intire obedience expiating the common guilt, suspending the fatal sentence, pacifying God's wrath, reducing righteousness, and restoring life to all that would embrace them; so doth St. Paul at large (in the 5th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans) propound and prosecute the comparison; closing his discourse thus: 'Therefore as by the offence of one man judgment came on all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came on all men to justification of life.' As guilt, wrath, and death forementioned, were the fruits of what Adam did, falling on all; so pardon, grace, and life, were (in design) the effects of what our Saviour performed relating unto all. Yea, the same comparison St. Paul seems to intimate in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he saith, that 'if one died for all, then are all men dead;' that is, Christ's dying for all men, implies all men in a state of condemnation and subjection to death; and that inference supposes the performances of the first and second Adam to be in their nature and primary effects coextended and commensurate. The same St. Paul seemeth in express terms to say, 'All men have sinned, and are fallen short (or are destitute) of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace (or favor) by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' (All men are justified, that is, according to God's favorable intention and design.) Yea, the very reason, why God permitted sin and death to prevail so universally is intimated to be his design of extending a capacity of righteousness and life unto all; so St. Paul tells us: God hath shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy on all. And particularly, that by virtue of Christ's performances death is abolished, and immortality is conferred on all men, St. Paul most expressly teacheth us; 'For,' saith he, 'as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

I observe that Prosper (an eager disputant about points allied to this) several times confesseth that Christ may be most rightly affirmed to have been crucified for the redemption of the whole world, especially on two accounts, for his true sus-

ception of human nature, and for the common perdition of all men in the first man :* we have touched the latter; let us add that

4. Our Saviour assuming our nature, and partaking of our flesh, 'being made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man;' yea, endued with the passions and infirmities of man's nature, exposed to the tribulations and inconveniences of man's life, did thereby ally himself, and put on a fraternal relation unto all men. 'Forasmuch,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'as children (the children he means of the same father, or brethren; as the tenor of his discourse makes evident) are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;' that is, graciously designing to become a brother to the children of men, he assumed all that was proper to man's nature. God, saith St. Paul, made *πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων*, 'the whole nation or race of men, dwelling on the face of the earth, of one blood;' and of that one blood our Saviour was pleased to take part, entitling us thereby to a consanguinity with him; and it was a title of his, which he seemed to affect and delight in, 'the Son of man.' He being such did sanctify our nature, by the closest conjunction thereof to the divine nature, and rendering it more than a temple of the Divinity; he dignified it, and (as that Apostle intimateth) advanced it above the angelical nature by an alliance to God himself; he thereby not only became qualified to mediate between God and man, and capable to transact that great business of man's salvation; but was engaged, and in a manner obliged to do it; for as he was a man, he surely was endued with the best of human affections, universal charity and compassion, which would excite him to promote the welfare of all; as he was a man, he was subject to the common law of humanity, which obliges to endeavor the common benefit of men. As he was a brother in relation, so he could not, he would not be otherwise in affection; he is not to be conceived deficient in performance of the offices suitable to that condition. That good-will which he requires us to bear toward all men indifferently, good and bad, friends and enemies, he questionless did

* Prosp. ad Gal. c. 3.

bear himself in the highest degree and to the utmost extent; the general beneficence, which in his conversation and practice he did express, doth signify how large his desires and intentions were in regard to the welfare of men; so that we may thence well aver with St. Ambrose:* *Incarnationis Dei mysterium est universæ salus creaturæ;* 'The mystery of God's incarnation doth respect the salvation of all mankind,' according to his desire and design.

5. We are taught that our Lord hath by his saving performances acquired a rightful propriety in, and a title of dominion over all men living; to him is committed the governance and protection of all mankind, as the reward of what he did and suffered for its sake. He is called 'the Lord of all men;' and 'the head of every man.' It is said that 'all things by his Father are given into his hand,' and 'put under his feet;' that 'power is given him over all flesh;' that 'all authority is given him in heaven and earth; all judgment is committed to him.' Which privileges, rights, dignities, are declared to have been procured by the virtue of his saving performances, and purchased by the price of his blood. 'For, to this end,' saith St. Paul, 'Christ both died and rose again, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living,' (or might exercise lordship over both the dead and living, ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ:) and, 'We are not our own, (saith he again,) we are bought with a price:' and, 'We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man,' (or, for the suffering of death, that by God's grace he might taste death for every man, crowned with glory and honor; for there seems to be such a trajection in the words:) and, 'He was obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross; therefore hath God exalted him, and given him a name above every name.' Subjection then and redemption, as they have one ground, so they are implied to have the same extent; as every one must call Christ Lord, so he may call him Saviour; therefore his Lord, because his Saviour. And since Christ hath got an authority over all men, a propriety in every man; since he hath under-

* Ambr. de Parad. 8.

taken to govern and protect the world, he questionless, as a prince of incomparable benignity and clemency, doth seriously intend and desire the best welfare of all his people; it surely cannot be a small benefit to the community of men, that they are his subjects; the objects of his princely care and of his mercy. —Κήδεται τῶν συμπάντων, ὅπερ καὶ καθήκει καὶ κυρίῳ πάντων γενομένῳ· σωτὴρ γάρ ἐστιν, οὐχὶ τῶν μὲν, τῶν δ' οὔ. 'He taketh care of all, which doth become him that is Lord of all; for that he is indifferently the Saviour of all,' saith Clem. Alexand.*

6. We are commanded to pray, intercede, and give thanks (indifferently) for all men, even for heathens and persecutors; as for the objects of God's benevolent affection; whom 'he would have to be saved, and to come to the knowlege of his truth;' expressing our charity in conformity to the unconfined goodness of God. Very good reason (argues St. Chrysostom) there is why we should pray for all men; for if God doth will the salvation of all men, we, in imitation of him, should will the same; and if we desire it, we should pray for it. On which score the Catholic Church hath constantly and carefully observed this precept; so the learned writer *de Vocatione Gentium* assures us: 'Which law of supplication,' saith he, 'the devotion of all priests and of all the faithful people doth so observe, that there is no part of the world, in which such prayers are not solemnised by the Christian people. The church of God doth therefore supplicate, not only for the saints and the regenerate in Christ, but also for all infidels and enemies of the cross of Christ; for all idolaters, all persecutors, all Jews, heretics, and schismatics.' And Prosper himself:† 'Setting aside,' saith he, 'that distinction, which the divine knowlege contains within the secret of his justice, it is most sincerely to be believed and professed, that God wills that all men shall be saved; since the Apostle, whose sentence that is, doth most solicitously enjoin that which is in all the churches most piously observed, that God should be implored for all men.' So doth he attest the common practice, and declare the ground thereof.

7. For which practice, and for the confirmation of its ground,

* Clem. Strom. vii. p. 505. † Pros. ad Obj. Vincent. 2.

(God's serious willingness and desire that men should be saved,) we have the pattern of our Lord himself praying to his Father for the pardon of the worst of men, his murderers; which as it demonstrated his charity toward them, so it argues that he was their Saviour, for that otherwise he knew they could not be in any capacity of having pardon. His praying for them implies the possibility of their receiving forgiveness; and such a possibility doth presuppose a disposition in God to grant it, and consequently a satisfaction provided, such as God requires and accepts, and which shall avail to their benefit, if toward the application thereof they perform their parts.

8. Indeed it is not easy to conceive how we can heartily pray for pardon, or for any other blessing, either for ourselves or for others, without supposing Christ to be our Saviour and theirs; without supposing God placable and well affected towards us and them in Christ, on the account of his performances and sufferings in our and their behalf. We are to offer up all our devotions in the name of Christ, and for his sake must implore all mercies and blessings from God; which how can we do seriously and with faith, if we may reasonably question whether Christ's merits do respect us, and consequently whether they can be available in our behalf? 'I will,' saith St. Paul, 'that men should pray in every place, lifting up pure hands, without wrath or doubting:' which precept how can any man observe; how can any man pray with calmness and confidence of mind, who is not assured that Christ is his Saviour, or that God for Christ's sake is disposed to grant his requests? But this point we may be obliged to prosecute somewhat farther in the application.

9. Either our Saviour's performances do respect all men, or some men (the far greatest part of men) do stand on no other terms than those of the first creation, or rather of the subsequent lapse and condemnation; being subject to an extremely rigorous law, and an infallibly certain guilt, and consequently to inevitable punishment; being utterly secluded from all capacity of mercy, and having no place of repentance left unto them, (the place of repentance being a most signal part of Christ's purchase;) so that if any such man should, according to the propor-

tion of his light and ability, perform what is agreeable to God's law, doing what is possible to him (this may be supposed, for what is possible to a man he may do, what is possible is possible) in order to his salvation, he notwithstanding should be incapable of any mercy, favor, or acceptance. But, beside that it is expressly said, that 'God did shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy on all;' and that we are plainly enough informed that our Lord did reverse the first fatal sentence, and hath, as the mediator between God and man, evacuated all former covenants by establishing a new one, (for if any former 'covenant had been good, there had been no place sought for a new one,' as the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth)—besides these considerations, I say, and beside that such suppositions do not well suit to the nature of God, and do not well consist with the tenor of his providence; God positively and vehemently disclaimeth this rigor of proceeding; he both under law and gospel declares himself ready to admit any man's repentance; yea, earnestly invites all men thereto; yea, grievously explains and expostulates with men for not repenting; yea, not only says it, but swears it by his own life, that he desires any wicked man should do it; he strongly asserts, he earnestly inculcates, he loudly proclaims to all his readiness to pardon, and his delight in showing mercy; the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering. He declares that he will exact an account of men, according to proportion, answerable to their willingness to do what they could; and to the improvements of those talents (those measures of light and strength) which they had, or might have had; that whoever is ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ πιστὸς, faithful in using the smallest power, shall be accepted and rewarded. He represents himself impartial in his judgment and acceptance of men's persons and performances; any man, in any nation, his sincere, though imperfect, piety and righteousness being acceptable to him: the final ruin of men is not imputed to any antecedent defect lying in man's state, or God's will, to no obstacle on God's part, nor incapacity on the part of man, but wholly to man's blameable neglect, or wilful abuse of the means conducible to his salvation: no want of mercy in God, or virtue in the passion of our Lord, are to be mentioned or thought of; infidelity

(formal or interpretative) and obstinate impenitency, disappointing God's merciful intentions, and frustrating our Lord's saving performances and endeavors, are the sole banes of mankind; 'Here,' saith our Lord, 'is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' And, 'I speak these things, that ye might be saved; but ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.' And, 'How often have I willed to gather thy children, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!' Of the pharisees and lawyers our Saviour said, that 'they defeated the counsel of God toward themselves,' (ἠθέτησαν τὴν βουλὴν Θεοῦ εἰς ἑαυτοὺς,) the counsel of God, who designed to bring them to repentance by the instruction and exhortation of St. John the Baptist. Our Saviour invited many to the participation of the gospel, ('that great feast of fat things to all people,' as the Prophet Isaiah calleth it;) but they would not come, saith the text: he iterated his message, but they carelessly neglecting it (ἀμελήσαντες) 'went away, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, and the rest took his servants, and intreated them spitefully, and slew them.' The sower (our Lord) did sow in the field (the world) the good seed of heavenly truth; but some would not admit it into their heads or hearts; from others temptation bare it away; in others worldly cares and desires choked it; our Lord spake the most convincing words, such as no man ever spake, such as drew publicans and harlots into the kingdom of heaven; he performed most astonishing works, such as never the like were done, which were sufficient to convert Tyre and Sidon, yea to have preserved Sodom, but without effect; such were the invincible obstinacy, the gross stupidity, the corrupt prejudices, and perverse affections of his auditors and spectators, on which causes our Lord chargeth the inefficacy and unsuccessfulness of his endeavors for their salvation. So doth St. Stephen call the Jews, unto whom the gospel was offered, 'hard-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ears;' such as 'did always resist the Holy Spirit.' St. Paul gives the same character of them, and assigns the same cause of their rejecting the gospel. And of the Jews of Antioch it is said, that they did 'thrust away the word of salvation, judg-

ing themselves unworthy of everlasting life,' (that is, disdaining to embrace the overture of everlasting life made unto them.) And, 'Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; being ignorant that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' So St. Paul expostulates with the incredulous Jew. And, 'How,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' So do our Lord and his Apostles state the reason of men's miscarrying in this great affair; signifying all requisite care and provision to be made on God's part for their salvation; and imputing the obstruction solely to their voluntary default of compliance with God in his conduct and management thereof.

Neither are the dealings and declarations of God toward those who lived under the law and prophets, impertinent to this purpose; they are applicable on consideration of parity in reason, or likeness in case.

What remonstrances concerning the gentleness, kindness, and equity of his dealings, what exprobrations of their stubbornness and stupidity God did anciently make to Israel under that particular dispensation, (which yet in tendency and in representation may be deemed general,) the same he might now use toward all mankind, under this universal economy, wherein God hath given to his 'Son, the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession;' whereby 'all the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord, and his Christ;' which hath erected an unconfined kingdom of grace; to which all men in design and of right are subject; in respect to which every nation is in obligation and duty become the people of God. 'What,' said God to them, 'could I have done more to my vineyard than I have done? Wherefore, when I looked for grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?' 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.' 'I have spread out my hands all the day long to a rebellious and gainsaying people.' 'I spake unto you rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called, but ye answered not;' 'I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have

set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.' 'When I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.' And, 'Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it.' 'They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear; yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit.' Which passages, with many others of the like importance that occur, do imply the large extent of God's merciful intentions, and the competency of the means which God affords for the salvation of men; that he wants no affection or inclination to save them; that he neglects no means proper for effecting it; that he draws them into the way leading thither by serious and earnest invitation, directs them by needful light and instruction, excites them by powerful arguments and persuasions; and as St. Ambrose speaketh, *Quod in Deo fuit, ostendit omnibus, quod omnes voluit liberare:* 'God showed to all, that what was in him, he did will to deliver (or save) all men.' Whence he may truly and properly be called the Benefactor and Saviour, even of those who by their wilful malice or neglect do not obtain salvation. For in respect to the same favors which are exhibited and tendered to them, he is the Saviour of those, who by hearkening to God's call, and complying with God's design; by well using the means vouchsafed, and performing the conditions required, do finally attain salvation.

If it be said that these transactions do refer only to God's own people, or to those only, unto whom God pleased to dispense especial revelations of truth and overtures of mercy; that we therefore cannot thence infer any thing concerning the general extent of God's design, or the virtue of Christ's performances in respect to all mankind; we may to this suggestion rejoin, that by observing the manner of God's proceedings toward them, unto whom he openly declareth his mind and will, we may reasonably collect how he standeth affected toward others, and by what rules, or on what accounts, he

dealeth with them; taking in the analogy of reason, and parity or disparity of the case. As to God's affection, it is the same every where, agreeable to that nature, which inclineth him to be 'good to all,' and 'merciful over all his creatures,' as the psalmist tells us; unto which disposition his providence yields attestation; for οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἀφῆκεν ἑαυτὸν, ἀγαθοποιῶν, 'he did not leave himself without testimony, doing good to all,' as St. Paul tells us; although he doth not dispense his favors in the same method, or discover his meaning by the same light, or call all men to him with the same voice and language.

Neither was mankind ever left destitute of that divine grace, which, as the good writer *de Vocatione Gentium* saith, 'never denied itself to any ages, with the same virtue, in different measure, with an unchangeable counsel, and multiform operation.' So in one place; and in another, 'There was always,' saith he, 'dispensed to all men a certain measure of instruction from above, which, although it came from a more occult and sparing grace, did yet suffice to some for remedy, to all for testimony.'

Comparing the different states of men, we may substitute with St. Paul, for the law of revelation engraved on tables, the law of nature written in men's hearts; for prophetical instructions, the dictates of reason; for audible admonitions and reproofs, secret whispers of grace, and checks of conscience; for extraordinary instances of divine power, the ordinary works of the creation, ('by which God's eternal divinity and power are discernible;') for the special and occasional influences of providence, the common and continual expressions of divine beneficence; then allowing for the disparity (as to measure of evidence and efficacy) in these things; and as to the rest, the case is the same. If one part hath means more clear and forcible, yet those which are granted to the other are not void of use or virtue; by them all men in all places 'may, seek God, if haply they may feel him and find him;' yea may, as St. Paul implieth, be able to know God, and induced to serve him; to thank him, and to glorify him in some measure; in a measure answerable to such light and strength; no more doth God require, for no more will he reckon with them If

their helps be deemed more low and scanty, their duty in proportion is less high, and their account will be more easy. Enough certainly they have to excuse God from misprision of not having provided competently for them, to render them, if they do not well use and improve it, inexcusable; and what they have is an effect of God's mercy procured and purchased by their Saviour. But of this point we may have occasion afterward to say more; I shall now only add, that this suggestion, well considered, may afford another argument to confirm our doctrine; which is this.

10. If our Lord be the Saviour of all those to whom God's truth is declared, and his mercy offered; or, if he be the Saviour of all the members of the visible church; particularly if he be the Saviour of those, who among these, rejecting the overtures and means of grace, or by disobedience abusing them, shall in the event fail of being saved, then is he the Saviour of all men. But our Lord is the Saviour of those persons; and therefore he is 'the Saviour of all men.' The assumption we assayed to show in the last argument; and many express testimonies of Scripture before mentioned establish it; the common style of Scripture doth imply it, when in the apostolical writings to all the visibly faithful indifferently the relation to Christ as their Saviour is assigned, an interest in all his saving performances is supposed, the title of σωζόμενοι and σεσωσμένοι (with others equivalent, of justified, sanctified, regenerated, quickened, &c.) are attributed. And in our text God is said to be the Saviour chiefly τῶν πιστῶν, of the faithful; which word in its common acception denotes all visible members of the Christian communion. And for its confirmation we adjoin; the Apostles at first, and the church ever since after them (except some heterodox people of late) have professed readily to confer holy baptism, and therein to dispense remission of sins, together with other evangelical graces and privileges, to every man professing his faith in Christ, and resolution to observe Christ's law, on this supposition, that Christ is the Saviour of all such persons, and by his salutary passion hath purchased that remission for them; although the dispensers of these graces could not discern what decrees God in his secret

providence had passed on them, or what the event should be as to their final state; yea although according to the judgment of prudence they could not but conceive that all such should not be saved, but that many of them should be of those, who (as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh) would 'draw back unto perdition,' who (as St. Peter implies some might and would do) would orget the purgation which they had received of their sins. That in thus doing the church proceeds on a persuasion that Christ is truly the Saviour of all its visible members, duly admitted and incorporated thereinto, the thing itself plainly signifies; the tenor of its practice makes palpable; the forms of speech used in its holy administrations (of prayers, of sacraments, of exhortations) do suppose or express. For how can each member singly be asserted in holy baptism to be washed from his sins, and sanctified to God, and made regenerate or adopted into the number of God's children, and made partaker of Christ's death? How can thanksgiving in the common name, in most general terms, be offered up for Christ's saving performances? or the holy bread and cup be imparted to each communicant as symbols and pledges of Christ's charity and mercy toward him? How can every Christian be instigated to obedience in gratitude to Christ; and those who transgress Christ's laws, upbraided for their ingratitude toward him; their rejecting, or renouncing, despising, or abusing him and his salvation? How can such things be said and done with any truth or consistency; yea without forgery and mockery, if every baptised Christian hath not an interest in our Lord's performances; if Christ be the Saviour only of an uncertain and unknown part in the church? This consideration of the church's practice hath made even the most vehement assertors of St. Austin's doctrine, (strained to the highest pitch,) in the more ancient and modest times, fully to acknowlege this position; that Christ is the Redeemer of every member of the visible church, as appears by this remarkable decree of the council of Valentia in France, [Anno 855.] (consisting of the bishops of three provinces, favorers of Godscalcus's opinions.) 'We also do believe it most firmly to be held, that all the multitude of the faithful, being regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, and

hereby truly incorporated into the church, and according to the apostolical doctrine baptised into the death of Christ, is by his blood washed from their sins.' Because there could be no true regeneration, unless there were made also a true redemption; since in the sacraments of the church there is nothing empty, (or vain,) nothing ludifactory: but all thoroughly true, and supported by its own very truth and sincerity. Yet that out of the very company of believers and the redeemed, some are eternally saved, because by God's grace they faithfully abide in their redemption, bearing the Lord's speech in their hearts, 'He that perseveres to the end shall be saved;' and that others, because they would not abide in the salvation of the faith, which they at first received, and did rather choose to frustrate the grace of redemption by evil doctrine or life, than to keep it, do nowise arrive to the plenitude of salvation, and to the perception of eternal beatitude. It is then a catholic and true doctrine, that at least Christ is a Saviour of all appearing Christians; and supposing the truth thereof, I say that by consequence he is also the Saviour of all men. For it appeareth thence, that the design of our Saviour's performances did not flow from, or was not grounded on any special love, or any absolute decree concerning those persons who in event shall be saved; since according to that supposition it extendeth to many others; wherefore it proceeded from God's natural goodness, and common kind affection toward mankind; from the compassion of a gracious Creator toward his miserable creature, whence all men are concerned and interested therein. Why God's merciful intentions were not explicitly declared and propounded to Socrates and Epictetus, as they were to Judas Iscariot and Simon Magus, is another question, which we may afterward in some manner assoil; at present it suffices to say, that the overture of mercy made to such wretches doth argue God's kind disposition and good intention toward all men; so it did in St. Ambrose's opinion; who says that our Lord ought not to pass by the man who should betray him, that all men might take notice, that in the choice even of his traitor, he did hold forth a pledge or mark of all men's being to be saved.

But the truth of this doctrine will farther appear by the de-

claration and surveyal of those respects according to which Christ is represented the Saviour of men, as also by considering how useful and conducible to piety this doctrine is, as ministering grounds and obligations, encouragements and motives to the practice of most considerable duties required from all men. But these things must be reserved to another occasion.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXXII.

I TIMOTHY, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 10.

In general we may say, that our Lord is the Saviour of all men, for that he hath rendered all men capable of salvation, and designed to salvation, removing all obstacles and procuring competent means thereto: this topic dilated on.

But if we view more nearly and distinctly the respects in which he is a *Saviour of all men*, it may be observed,

1. That he is so, as having effected that Almighty God, who was most justly provoked against mankind, hath laid down his wrath, and cast a favorable aspect on them, being thoroughly reconciled to them by our Saviour's mediation.

2. Jesus is *the Saviour of all men*, by satisfying the divine justice, and repairing God's honor in their behalf. The intensity of his love in this respect dilated on, and the fulness of the satisfaction made: hence if we inquire what he redeemed, the consideration of what he paid may help to inform us: this point enlarged on.

3. Our Lord is *the Saviour of all men*, as having in behalf of mankind transacted and ratified a new covenant, very necessary for, and very conclusive to, the salvation of men; whereby salvation is made attainable, and is really tendered to all on feasible and equal conditions. This covenant was predicted and proclaimed by the prophets of old: this our Lord commanded his Apostles to declare and propound to all mankind: *go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

4. Our Lord is so, as having purchased and procured for

all men competent aids, whereby they are enabled to perform the conditions required of them in order to their salvation; to acquire a sufficient knowlege of their duty, to subdue their lusts, to withstand temptations, to repent of their sins, &c.: the truth of which point, taking in the consideration of man's natural state, may be inferred from the truth of the points preceding: this topic enlarged on, and illustrated from holy writ.

SERMON LXXII.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

I TIMOTHY, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 10.

——The living God; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.

THAT our Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all men, we have before from plain testimonies of holy Scripture, and from some arguments grounded there, assayed to show. The same will be made farther apparent by considering the respects according to which he is such; and those we may first consider generally and in the gross, then survey them more particularly and distinctly.

In general we may say that our Lord is the Saviour of all men, for that he hath rendered all men *salvabiles*, capable of salvation; and *salvandos*, designed to salvation. For that he hath removed all obstacles peremptorily debarring men from access to salvation, and hath procured competent furtherances to their attainment of it. For that he hath rescued mankind out of that dead and desperate condition, wherein it lay involved; being 'the bread of God,' 'who hath descended from heaven, that he might give life to the world,' as he saith of himself. For that he hath performed whatever on his part is necessary or fit in order to salvation, antecedently to the acceptance and compliance with those reasonable conditions, which by God's wisdom are required toward the instating men into a full and immediate right to salvation, or to a complete

and actual fruition thereof. He made the way to happiness plain and passable; levelling the insuperable cliffs, and filling up the chasms, and rectifying the obliquities, and smoothing the asperities thereof, as the prophet foretold; so that all men who would, might conveniently walk therein. He set the doors of paradise wide open, so that who pleased might enter in; all the bonds and restraints under which men lay, he so far loosed, that any man might be free, who would concur to his own liberty and enlargement. All the protection, aid, and encouragement which was needful toward obtaining salvation, he afforded and exhibited to every one, that would embrace and make use of them. In respect to which performances he might be justly esteemed and truly called a Saviour, although all men do not in effect become saved. For the estimation and denomination of performances are to be grounded on their own nature and design, not on events depending on the contingent and arbitrary behavior of men. As he that freely offers a rich boon is no less to be accounted a benefactor and liberal, although his gift be refused, than if it were accepted; as he that opens the prison is to be styled a deliverer, although the captive will not go forth; as he that ministers an effectual remedy, although the patient will not use it, deserves the honor and thanks due to a physician; so is our Lord in regard to what he hath performed for men, and offered to them, (being sufficient to prevent their misery, and promote their happiness,) to be worthily deemed, and thankfully acknowleged, their Saviour, although not all men, yea although not one man should receive the designed benefit. Accordingly we may observe that in the Scripture-style those persons are said to be saved, who are only in a way toward salvation, although they do not arrive thither; and the means conducing to salvation are said to save, although their effect may be defeated; σωζόμενοι and σεσωσμένοι are terms applied to all Christians, and Christ is ὁ σώσας, 'he that hath saved them;' and faith is said to have saved them, although some of them εἰκῆ ἐπίστευσαν, have believed in vain, or to no effect, forsaking and renouncing their faith; and baptism saves them who partake it, although being washed, they return to their wallowing in the mire. And as our Lord is so termed a Saviour in respect to them who are,

by faith and admission into the church, put into a more near capacity of salvation, as St. Paul speaketh: ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία, ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ('Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed;') so is he in respect of all those, who are in any capacity thereof, although a more remote one.

But let us now view more nearly and distinctly the respects in which he is a Saviour of all men, or the particular benefits and advantages conducing to salvation, which by his performances accrue to mankind; for πάμπολυ τὴν σωτηρίαν ἁπάσῃ χαρίζεται τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι, 'In very many ways he bestoweth salvation on all mankind,' as Clemens Alexandrinus speaks.

4. Our Lord is 'the Saviour of all men,' as having effected that Almighty God (who on great provocations was justly displeased and angry with man, who had averted his face, and withdrawn his favor from mankind, whom our apostasy and rebellion had rendered a stranger and an enemy to us) hath deposed his wrath toward mankind, hath conceived a kind affection to it, doth cast a favorable aspect on it; being thoroughly reconciled and made a friend thereto by our Saviour's mediation. 'This is my beloved Son, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα, in whom I have been well pleased,' was the attestation given from God to our Lord; the meaning whereof in regard to men, the holy choir of angels did interpret, when after the gladsome report of his birth, (that 'great joy, which should be to all people,') they sang, 'Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will toward men.' Which St. Paul farther declareth, when he saith, that by him εὐδόκησε, God pleased to reconcile unto himself all things, on earth, and in heaven; and when he saith, 'That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their sins.' And, 'When we were enemies,' saith he again, 'we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son:' 'When we were enemies,' that implies God antecedently to any man's conversion to have been appeased, and become favorably disposed toward all men, or toward those whom St. Paul speaketh unto, as men; so the reason of the case doth import, and so the analogy which St. Paul immediately after propounds between the results of Adam's transgression and our

* Pædag. 11.

Saviour's obedience (as to provocation and reconciliation, to condemnation and absolution, to the intents of bringing death and life on all men) doth enforce. Whence it is that God declareth himself now to bear an universal goodwill to mankind, that he doth earnestly desire the welfare of all men, and is displeased with the ruin of any man; that he 'would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowlege of the truth,' because 'there is one Mediator between God and man;' 'that he would not have any perish, but that all should come to repentance;' this he affirms, yea (for the confirmation of our faith and our consolation therein) he in the evangelical prophet swears it, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' So far toward our salvation is done, God meets us half way; he is reconciled unto us, it remains only that we be reconciled to him; that we hearken to the embassy from him: 'Be reconciled to God.'

2. Jesus is 'the Saviour of all men,' by satisfying the divine justice, and repairing God's honor in their behalf. The disloyal and ingrateful behavior of man had so wronged, so endamaged, so dishonored God, (had so abused the goodness, disparaged the wisdom, slighted the power, impeached and slurred the authority of his Creator, had so prejudiced all the rights and interests of God,) that by the divine wisdom it was thought fit that he should not be restored into a capacity of mercy and favor, without a signal compensation made, and an exemplary punishment undergone, whereby the right of God should conspicuously be asserted, his love of goodness and dislike of wickedness should be remarkably demonstrated, and every creature in heaven and earth should be solemnly admonished of its duty; of the reverence and obedience it owes to the great Creator, of the heinous guilt and horrible mischief it incurs by offending him. Such a compensation man was nowise able to make, or fit to undergo such a punishment: our Saviour therefore, out of infinite pity and charity, did undertake both; by a voluntary condescension putting himself into the low and weak state of man; subjecting himself unto that law which man was obliged unto, and suffering the pains which man had deserved. This he was pleased to do in man's behalf, and in

our stead; and God was pleased to accept it as so done. His incarnation (or exinanition of himself, as St. Paul calleth it) was an act of that high duty and goodness, that it in virtue surpassed all the obedience, which all creatures were able to render; that it yielded God more satisfaction and more honor than the joint endeavors of all the world could confer. His with so intense charity and cheerfulness fulfilling all righteousness did far more please God, than all our most exact obedience could have done; his enduring bitter pains and disgraces (considering the infinite dignity of his person, his near relation and dearness to God, his perfect innocence and rectitude, yea his immense charity, contentedness, and patience) more than countervailed the punishment due to the sins of all men. Such a payment was more than served to discharge all our debts, (it served to purchase an overplus of graces and blessings;) so rich a price was more than sufficient to ransom all the world from captivity; so goodly, so pure, so sweet, so precious a sacrifice might worthily expiate and atone all the guilts of men.

Now if we inquire what our Saviour did redeem, the consideration of what he paid may, as St. Austin tells, help to inform us; *Quæritis quid emerit? Videte quid dederit, et invenite quid emerit.* 'Do ye seek,' saith he, 'what he bought? See what he gave, and find what he bought.' However, that as the value and sufficiency of our Lord's performances, so the design and effect thereof did reach so far in regard to man; that his charity was no less extensive than his performance was complete, for our good, the holy Scripture teaches us. For, 'He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world,' saith the Baptist. And, 'The bread,' saith he, 'which I gave is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' And, 'He is a propitiation,' saith St. John, 'for our sins; and not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world.' And, 'He is the mediator of God and man, who gave himself (*ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων*) a ransom,' in the stead, and 'for all men,' saith St. Paul. And, 'He tasted death for every one,' saith the author to the Hebrews. And, He was 'that one Man,' who, as it was expedient, did die for the whole nation of men. And, 'God was in him, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their

sins.' And, 'He came into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might by him be saved,' (or freed from condemnation.) And, 'As by the offence of one man judgment came on all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, mercy came on all to justification of life.' The end we see of our Saviour's performances was, that he might wipe off the guilt of sin from all mankind, that he might reverse the condemnation passed thereon, and that he might remove the punishment due thereto; or, that, absolving the first man's sin, he might take it away from the whole race, as St. Athanasius speaks.

'All men have sinned, and come short (or are destitute) of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' 'He was born under the law, that he might redeem those which were under the law.' 'He that knew no sin was made sin, (was punished and dealt with as a sinner,) that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' (that we might be capable of being esteemed and dealt with as righteous by God on his account.) So that the result is, divine justice being fully satisfied, and the honor of God fully repaired, (in regard to all sins past and future,) the mouth of vengeance being stopped, the claims of death and hell being evacuated, that general sentence of condemnation (passed on all the sons of Adam) is suspended, death ceases to reign by any just power, or inevitable necessity; (it is, as St. Paul saith, abolished or abrogated as to any lawful right, or necessary force it hath;) the rigor and severity of that law, which on pain of death exacteth most punctual obedience, (and which consequently doth expose all men to unavoidable condemnation,) is tempered and abated, a foundation is laid for the showing mercy and granting pardon. In respect whereto,

3. Our Lord is 'the Saviour of all men,' as having in the behalf of mankind transacted and ratified a new covenant, very necessary for, and very conducible to, the salvation of mankind; whereby salvation is made attainable, and is really tendered unto all, on feasible and equal conditions. According to the purport whereof on any man, (however stained or loaded

with the guilt of most heinous transgressions) his embracing the overtures thereof, consenting to, and complying with the terms propounded therein, that is, sincerely believing, and seriously repenting; returning to God with hearty desires and earnest resolutions to serve him; God is ready to dispense mercy and pardon, and immediately receiveth the person into grace and favor with him; yea, the man continuing to perform a faithful though imperfect obebience, an obedience suitable to man's natural infirmity and frailty, and proportionable to the assistances afforded him: God farther promiseth to bestow inestimable blessings and rewards of joy and happiness. That covenant which the prophets implied of old, when (beside and beyond what the Jewish law did import) they preached thus: 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil,'—'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.' And, 'Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' And, 'If the wicked man will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die,' (so God in Isaiah and Ezekiel declareth his intention to proceed with men, avowing that way of his to be most equal and fair.) This is that covenant which our Lord commanded his Apostles to declare and propound to all mankind; 'Go ye,' said he to them, 'into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature;' that gospel, according to which, as it is expressed in St. Luke, 'repentance and remission of sins ought to be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;' in respect to which, St. Peter says, that 'God hath exalted our Lord to be a Prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance to Israel, and remission of sins;' (to grant repentance, that is, as the Apostle to the Hebrews and Clemens Romanus speak, *μετανοίας τόπον*, room for repentance, or capacity to receive pardon on repentance; concerning which covenant that Clemens, (the fellow-laborer of St. Paul, and whom Clemens Alexandrinus calleth an Apostle,) in that excellent, admirable, and almost canonical Epistle to the Corinthians, which, as Eu-

sebius and Jerome tell us, was anciently publicly read in most churches, hath these remarkably full and clear expressions; 'Let us,' saith he, 'look steadfastly on the blood of Christ, and let us see how precious to God his blood is, which being shed for our salvation, did bring the grace of repentance to the whole world. Let us attentively regard all ages, and observe that in every generation the Lord granted place of repentance to them who would turn unto him.' This is that new and better covenant, established on better promises, (cancelling all former, exceptionable, imperfect, and ineffectual compacts, referring to man's interest and duty,) about which the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth, and whereof he calleth our Lord the Mediator and Sponsor; in regard to which St. Paul calleth him the 'Mediator between God and man;' plainly declaring all men to have a concernment and interest therein; for this supposition he useth as an argument proving God's universal desire of man's conversion and salvation: 'Who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowlege of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.' By virtue of which covenant it is, that any such degrees of love or fear toward God, such as men are capable of, are available, any righteous performances, such as our weakness can produce, are acceptable, any honest endeavors do receive countenance and encouragement; and that, as St. Peter observed, 'in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted by him;' although his fear of God be not so intense, or pure; his righteousness not so exact and unblameable, as according to extremity of law and duty they should be. From which covenant so far is any man, according to God's intention and desire, from being excluded, that all men are seriously invited, vehemently exhorted, earnestly intreated to enter into it, and to partake the benefits exhibited thereby. Every man who feeleth himself to want those benefits, and is desirous of mercy and ease from the guilt and burden of his sins, may come and welcome. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;' so the evangelical prophet proclaims; and, 'If any man thirsteth, let him come to me and drink;' crieth our Lord; and, 'Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' (Δεῦτε

πάντες, 'Come all to me:' all men therefore, saith Origen, who from the nature of sin do labor and are burdened, are called to that rest; which is with the word of God.) And, 'In Christ's name,' saith St. Paul, 'we are ambassadors, as though God by us entreateth: we pray you for Christ's sake, be ye reconciled to God;' the purport of which embassy, together with its extent, he otherwhere thus expresseth, τανῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πᾶσι πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν, 'He now proclaimeth to all men every where that they should repent;' he consequently holds forth to all the benefits annexed to repentance. But of this we spake formerly.

4. Our Lord Jesus is 'the Saviour of all men,' as having purchased and procured for them competent aids, whereby they are enabled to perform the conditions required of them in order to their salvation; to acquire a sufficient knowlege of their duty, to subdue their bad inclinations and lusts, to withstand temptations; or briefly, whereby they are enabled sincerely to repent of their sins, and acceptably to perform their due obedience. The truth of this point, taking in the consideration of man's natural state, may by good consequence be inferred from the truth of the points foregoing. If men are naturally so dead in trespasses and sins, so enslaved and sold under sin; so very prone to evil and averse to good; so dark and blind, that they cannot well discern what they should do; so corrupt and weak, that they cannot perform what they know and confess to be good, (as St. Paul affirmeth men to be,) and consequently are of themselves indisposed to perform the duties acceptable to God, and requisite by his appointment toward their salvation, then either our Lord hath provided for them a communication of grace sufficient to countervail or surmount that natural impotency, or all his designs for their good are imperfect or inconsistent, (aiming at an end, without proving requisite means, or removing necessary obstructions,) and his performances, whereby the forementioned benefits were procured, do prove ineffectual and fruitless. For God being appeased, and become well-affected to man's salvation, divine justice being satisfied, the rigor of law being mitigated, repentance being made available, and an obedience, agreeable to man's frailty, becoming acceptable, with all other the immediate results of our Saviour's

transactions for man, would signify nothing in regard to him, who still lieth under a necessity of sinning, or an inability of performing that which is indispensably exacted from him toward a complete enjoyment of those benefits and favors. In vain is the debt paid and the bond cancelled, and the prison set open, and liberty proclaimed, and the prisoner called forth, if he be not himself able to knock off the fetters which detain him, and there is no help afforded by which he may do it. But our Lord hath surely laid his designs more advisedly, and hath prosecuted his work more perfectly. Wherefore we may suppose that a competency of grace and spiritual assistance is by virtue of our Saviour's performances really imparted to every man, qualifying him to do what God requires, and is ready to accept from him in order to his welfare; that our Saviour hath sent abroad his Holy Spirit, (that fountain of all true goodness, of all spiritual light, strength, and comfort,) like the sun, to shine, to warm, to dispense benign influences over the world; although it shineth not so brightly and vigorously, and its presence is not so visible and sensible in one place as another; which Holy Spirit, as it is in its essence omnipresent, so it is likewise in its energy incessantly working (in reasonable measure, right manner, and fit season, as wisdom ordereth) on the minds and affections of men, infusing good thoughts and motions, impressing arguments and motives to good practice, cherishing and promoting good purposes, checking bad designs, restraining and reclaiming from bad courses. Our reason, however aided by exterior instruction and excitement, being unable to deal with those mighty temptations, oppositions, and discouragements we are to encounter with, he hath given us a wise and powerful Spirit, to guide and advise us, to excite and encourage us, to relieve and succor us in all our religious practice and spiritual warfare. So that all deliverance from the prevalency of temptation and sin we owe to his grace and assistance. That to these purposes the Holy Spirit is plentifully conferred on all the visible members of the Christian church, we have plainly declared in Scripture; it was a promise concerning the evangelical times, that God would pour forth his Spirit on all flesh; the collation thereof is a main part of the evangelical covenant, (into a participation of which every

Christian is admitted,) it being the finger of God, whereby God's law is impressed on their inward parts, and engraven in their hearts, (as the prophets describe the effects of this covenant.) And the end of our Saviour's passion is by St. Paul declared to be, 'that the blessing of Abraham might come unto the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith;' that is, that becoming Christians we might partake thereof. And the apostolical ministry (that is, preaching the gospel, and dispensing the privileges thereof) is therefore styled, διακονία πνεύματος, 'the ministry of the Spirit.' And the 'tasting of the heavenly gift, and partaking the Holy Ghost,' is, according to the Apostle to the Hebrews, part of the character of a visible Christian, (such a Christian, who might παραπεσεῖν, 'fall away,' as he supposeth, and 'recrucify the Lord, and expose him to shame:') and St. Peter makes reception of the Holy Ghost to be a concomitant or consequent of baptism; 'Repent,' saith he, 'and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise (or that promise of the Spirit, which is called the Spirit of promise peculiar to the gospel) is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call:' (that is, the Holy Spirit is promised to all, how far distant soever in time or place, who shall be invited unto, and shall embrace Christianity;) and accordingly, St. Paul saith of Christians, that 'God according to his mercy hath saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' And, 'Know ye not,' saith he to the Corinthians, 'that ye are the temple of God; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' (that is, Do ye not understand this to be a common property and privilege of Christians, such as ye profess yourselves to be?) And the union of all Christians into one body doth, according to St. Paul, result from this one Spirit, as a common soul imparted to them all, inanimating and actuating the whole body, and every member thereof. For 'by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and have been all made to drink of one Spirit.' And it hath been the doctrine constantly with general consent delivered in and by the

Catholic church, that to all persons, by the holy mystery of baptism duly initiated into Christianity, and admitted into the communion of Christ's body, the grace of the Holy Spirit is communicated, enabling them to perform the conditions of piety and virtue which they undertake; and continually watching over them for accomplishment of those purposes; which Spirit they are admonished not to resist, to abuse, to grieve, to quench; but to use it well, and improve its grace to the working out their salvation. Thus much concerning the result of our Saviour's performances, in this kind, in respect to the community of Christians, we learn from the holy Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition interpreting it; whence we may discern that the communications of grace do not always flow from any special love or absolute decree concerning men, but do commonly proceed from the general kindness and mercy of God, by our Lord procured for mankind; and consequently we may thence collect, that somewhat of this nature is to the same purpose, from the same source, and on the same account, also granted and dispensed to others. Unto Christians indeed this great benefit (for the reward, the encouragement, the support of their faith; and for promoting their obedience, who are in a nearer capacity and more immediate tendency to salvation) is in a more plentiful measure, and a more conspicuous manner dispensed; but that, besides that dispensation, there have been other (not so plainly signified, or expressly promised, yet really imparted) communications of grace, in virtue of our Saviour's merits, there are (beside the main reason alleged, inferring it from our Lord's being the Saviour of all men) divers good inducements to believe. For even those Christians, to whom on their faith the Holy Spirit is promised and bestowed, are by previous operations of God's grace (opening their minds, inclining their heart, and tempering their affections) induced to embrace Christianity, faith itself being a gift of God, and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. And before our Saviour's coming all good men have thereby been instructed and enabled to do well. And before any special revelation made, or any particular covenant enacted, (before the inclosure of a particular people or church, the confinement of God's extraordinary presence and providence to one place,) divine grace appears dif-

fused over several nations, being watchful in guiding and moving men to good, and withdrawing them from evil; neither is there reason why such an appropriation of special graces and blessings (on special reasons) unto some should be conceived to limit or contract God's general favor, or to withdraw his ordinary graces from others. God surely ('who is πλούσιος ἐν ἐλέει, rich in mercy;' yea, hath ὑπερβάλλοντα πλοῦτον χάριτος, 'excessive riches of grace') is not so poor or parsimonious, that being liberal to some should render him sparing toward others; his grace is not like the sea, which if it overflow on one shore, must therefore retire from another; if it grow deep in one place, must become shallower in another. 'Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?' it is a question in Micah; and, 'Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?' is another question in Isaiah: 'No; The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear;' at any time, in any place; he is no less able, no less ready than he ever was, to afford help to his poor creatures, wherever it is needful or opportune. As there was of old an Abimelech among the Philistines, whom God by special warning deterred from commission of sin; a divine Melchisedeck among the Canaanites; a discreet and honest Jethro in Midian; a very religious and virtuous Job in Arabia; who by complying with God's grace, did evidence the communication thereof in several nations; so it is not unreasonable to suppose the like cause now, although we cannot by like attestation certify concerning the particular effects thereof. We may at least discern and show very conspicuous footsteps of divine grace, working in part, and producing no despicable fruits of moral virtue, (of justice and honesty, temperance and sobriety, benignity and bounty, courage and constancy in worthy enterprises, meekness, patience, modesty, prudence, and discretion, yea, of piety and devotion in some manner,) even among Pagans, which if we do not allow to have been in all respects so complete as to instate the persons endued with them, or practisers of them, in God's favor, or to bring them to salvation; yet those qualities and actions (in degree, or in matter at least, so good and so conformable to God's law) we can hardly deny to have been the gifts of God, and the effects of divine grace;

they at least themselves acknowleged so much; for, *Nulla sine Deo mens bona est*, 'No mind is good without God,' said Seneca;* and, Θείᾳ μοίρᾳ φαίνεται παραγιγνομένη ἡ ἀρετὴ, οἷς παραγίνεται, 'Virtue appears to proceed from a divine dispensation to them who partake of it,' said Socrates: and, Αἳ ἄρισται φύσεις, ἀμφισβητήσιμοι ἐν μετρίῳ τῆς ἄκρας ἀρετῆς πρὸς τὴν ἐσχάτην μοχθηρίαν καθωρμισμέναι, δέονται ξυναγωνίστου Θεοῦ καὶ ξυλλήπτορος τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ θάτερα τὰ κρείττω ῥοπῆς καὶ χειραγωγίας. 'The best natured souls being constituted in the middle between the highest virtue and extreme wickedness, do need God to be their succorer and assistant in the inclining and leading them to the better side;' saith Max. Tyr. xxii. St. Austin himself, who seems the least favorable in his judgment concerning their actions and state, who calls their virtues but images and shadows of virtue (*non veras, sed verisimiles*) splendid sins; acknowleges those virtuous dispositions and deeds to be the gifts of God, to be laudable, to procure some reward, to avail so far, that they, because of them, shall receive a more tolerable and mild treatment from divine justice; which things considered, such persons do at least by virtue of grace imparted to them, obtain some part of salvation, or an imperfect kind of salvation, which they owe to our Lord, and in regard whereto he may be called in a sort their Saviour.

But although the torrent of natural pravity hath prevailed so far, as that we cannot assign or nominate any (among those who have lived out of the pale) who certainly or probably have obtained salvation, yet doth it not follow thence, that a sufficient grace was wanting to them. The most universal practice contrary to the intents of grace doth not evince a defect of grace. For we see that the same cause hath in a manner universally overborne and defeated other means and methods designed and dispensed by God for the instruction and emendation of mankind.

God's spirit did long strive with the inhabitants of the old world: yet no more than one family was bettered or saved thereby. God by his good spirit instructed the Israelites in the wilderness, as Nehemiah saith, yet no more than two per-

* Sen. Ep. 73.

sons did get into Canaan: that people afterward had afforded to them great advantages of knowlege and excitements to piety, (so that God intimates that he could not have done more for them, in that regard, than he had done.) Yet, 'There is none that understandeth, or seeketh after God,' was a complaint in the best times. The Pagans had the means of knowing God, as St. Paul affirmeth, yet generally they grew vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; from which like cases and examples we may infer that divine grace might be really imparted, although no effect correspondent to its main design were produced. Neither, because we cannot allege any evident instances of persons converted or saved by virtue of this grace, (this *parcior occultiorque gratia*, 'more sparing and secret grace,' as the good writer *de Vocatione Gentium* calls it,) are we forced to grant there were none such; but as in Israel when Elias said, the children of Israel have 'forsaken God's covenant, thrown down his altars, and slain his prophets with the sword; and I, I only am left;' there were yet in Israel, living closely, 'seven thousand knees, who had not bowed to Baal:' so among the generations of men, commonly overgrown with ignorance and impiety, there might, for all that we can know, be divers persons indiscernible to common view, who, by complying with the influences of God's grace, have obtained competently to know God, and to reverence him; sincerely to love goodness, and hate wickedness; with an honest heart, to observe the laws of reason and righteousness, in such a manner and degree which God might accept; so that the grace afforded might not only *sufficere omnibus in testimonium*, (suffice to convince all men,) but *quibusdam in remedium*, (to correct and cure some,) as that writer *de Voc. Gent.* speaks. The consideration of God's nature and providence doth serve farther to persuade the truth of this assertion. If God be 'rich in mercy' and bounty toward all his creatures, as such, (and such he frequently asserts himself to be,) if he be all-present and all-provident, as he certainly is, how can we conceive him to stand as an unconcerned spectator of what men do, in affairs of this consequence? That he should be present beholding men to run precipitantly into desperate mischiefs and miscarriages, without offering to stay or obstruct

them; struggling with their vices and follies, without affording them any relief or furtherance; assaulted by strong temptations, without yielding any support or succor; panting after rest and ease, without vouchsafing some guidance and assistance toward the obtaining them? How can he see men invincibly erring and inevitably sinning, without making good what the psalmist says of him: 'Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way;' to withhold his grace in such cases, seemeth inconsistent with the kind and compassionate nature of God, especially such as now it stands, being reconciled to mankind, by the 'Mediator of God and men, Christ Jesus.' He also, that is so bountiful and indulgent toward all men in regard to their bodies and temporal state; 'who preserveth their life from destruction,' who protecteth them continually from danger and mischief; 'who openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desires of every living thing; who satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness;' who, as St. Paul speaketh, 'filleth men's hearts with food and gladness;' is it likely that he should altogether neglect their spiritual welfare, and leave their souls utterly destitute of all sustenance or comfort; that he should suffer them to lie fatally exposed to eternal death and ruin, without offering any means of redress or recovery? To conceive so of God, seemed very unreasonable even to a Pagan philosopher: 'Do you think,' saith Max. Tyrius, 'that divination, poetry, and such like things, are by divine inspiration insinuated into men's souls, and that virtue (so much better, and so much rarer a thing) is the work of moral art? You have forsooth a worthy conceit of God, who take him to be liberal in bestowing mean things, and sparing of better things.' 'He that,' as St Paul saith, 'giveth to all men life, breath, and all things,' will he withhold from any that best of gifts, and most worthy of him to give, that grace whereby he may be able to serve him, to praise him, to glorify him, yea, to please and gratify him; to save a creature and subject of his; the thing wherein he so much delighteth? From hence also, that God hath vouchsafed general testimonies of his goodness, inducements to seek him, footsteps whereby he may be discovered and known, a light of reason and law of nature written on men's hearts; attended

with satisfactions, and checks of conscience; so many dispositions to knowlege and obedience, as St. Paul teacheth us; we may collect that he is not deficient in communicating interior assistances, promoting the good use and improvement of those talents; for that otherwise the bestowing them is frustraneous and useless; being able to produce no good effect; yea, it rather is an argument of unkindness, being apt only to produce an ill effect in those on whom it is conferred; an aggravation of sin, an accumulation of guilt and wrath on them.

If it be said, that having such grace is inconsistent with the want of an explicit knowlege of Christ, and of faith in him; why may not we say, that as probably (so St. Chrysostom, vid. Mont. App. I.) most good people before our Lord's coming received grace without any such knowlege or faith; that as to idiots and infants, our Saviour's meritorious performances are applied (in a manner unknowable by us) without so much as a capacity to know or believe any thing; that so we (to whom God's judgments are inscrutable, and his ways uninvestigable) know not how grace may be communicated unto, and Christ's merits may avail for other ignorant persons? in respect to whom we may apply that of St. John; 'The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.' However, that such persons may have a grace capacifying them to arrive to that knowlege and faith, to which fuller communications of grace are promised; so that in reasonable esteem (as we shall presently show) the revelation of evangelical truth, and the gift of faith, may be supposed to be conferred on all men—so that we may apply to them that in the Revelation; 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me;' (that is, Behold, I allure every man to the knowlege and embracing of Christianity; if any man will open his mind and heart, so as to comply with my solicitations, I am ready to bestow on him the participation of evangelical mercies and blessings:) and to such persons those promises and rules in the gospel may appertain; He that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened: 'The heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' 'He that is ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ πιστὸς,

(faithful in the use of the least grace,') shall be rewarded. And, 'To him that hath (or that diligently keepeth and husbandeth what he hath) shall more be given.'

And how God sometimes dealeth with such persons the eminent instances of St. Paul and Cornelius do show. But concerning this point I spake somewhat before, and have perhaps been too large now; I shall only add that saying of the wise writer *de Voc. Gen.* 'A pious mind,' saith he, 'should not, I think, be troubled at that question, which is made concerning the conversion of all, or not all men; if we will not obscure those things which are clear, by those things which are secret; and while we wantonly insist on things shut up, we be not excluded from those which are open and plain.'* Which in effect is the same with this; that since we are plainly taught that our Lord is the Saviour of all men; and it is consequent thence, that he hath procured grace sufficiently capacifying all men to obtain salvation; we need not perplex the business, or obscure so apparent a truth, by debating how that grace is imparted; or by laboring overmuch in reconciling the dispensation thereof with other dispensations of providence.

* Lib. i. cap. 8.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXXIII.

I TIMOTHY, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 10.

5. JESUS is *the Saviour of all men*, as the conductor of all men into and through the way of salvation. It is a proper title of those brave captains, who by their wisdom and valor have freed their country from straits and oppressions. So were those judges and princes who anciently delivered Israel from their enemies, commonly styled: instances quoted: so is Jesus with greatest reason called, as being the *captain of salvation*; &c.

6. He is so, as having perfectly discovered and demonstrated the way and means of salvation, the gracious purposes of God concerning it, the duties required by him in order to it, the great helps towards it, the mighty determents from neglecting it, in fine the whole will of God relating to it; in having opened those *mysteries* of truth, which *were hidden from ages and generations*, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

7. If now it be inquired, or objected; why then is not the gospel revealed unto all men? how are they benefited who still sit in darkness? *How can they call on him in whom they believe not? and how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* To this suggestion it may be answered,

1. That God's intentions are not to be interpreted, nor his performances estimated, by events depending on the contingency of human actions; but by his own declarations and precepts, with the ordinary provision of competent means to produce the effects which he declares his design of performing. What he reveals as by himself designed, that he does really design;

what he says, that he performs, according to moral estimation, though the thing on other accounts be not effected.

Thus, for example, God would have all men to live together here in peace, order, and health, according to reason and justice, and in the best state toward happiness ; for which purposes he has endowed them with all proper faculties, &c. : yet how often, through the perversity of men, do all such means prove ineffectual ! So likewise God desires that in his church knowlege, piety, peace, charity, and good order should grow and flourish ; to which purpose he has appointed governors and all other necessary means : notwithstanding which, how often do ignorance, error, and impiety prevail ! Which events are not to be conceived as derogatory to God's good-will and careful providence. This argument applied to the propagation of the gospel. And if this answer is not fully satisfactory, it may be farther said,

2. That God, besides that ordinary provision, is ready to interpose extraordinarily in disclosing his truth to them that are worthy of such favor, and fit to receive it ; that his general desire and design of revealing his truth to all men is very well consistent with his providentially withholding the discovery thereof from some persons and some nations ; for neither his wisdom, goodness, nor justice might permit him, that he should impart that revelation to such persons as he may see indisposed to comply with and profit by it, or who have greatly abused his lesser graces, and misimproved the lesser talents afforded them : &c.

That God doth commonly observe this method, to dispense the revelation of his truth according to men's disposition to receive, and aptness to profit by it, appears from many parts of Scripture.

On the one hand we may observe that those whom our Saviour chose to call, were persons disposed at once to forsake all and follow him : this point enlarged on : and on the other

hand, that God withholds the special discoveries of his truth, on account of men's indisposition to them and their demerits, may appear from our Lord's order to his disciples, *not to give that which is holy to dogs, nor to cast their pearls before swine:* various other instances adduced from holy writ.

3. If all these considerations do not thoroughly satisfy us concerning the reason of God's proceedings in this case, we may reflect that his providence is inscrutable and impenetrable to us: therefore, although we cannot fully resolve the difficulty, we should without distrust adhere to those plain and positive declarations, whereby he represents himself as seriously designing, *that all men should come to the knowlege of the truth.*

SERMON LXXIII.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

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1 TIMOTHY, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 10.

——The living God; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.

5. JESUS is 'the Saviour of all men,' as the conductor of all men into and through the way of salvation. It is a very proper title, and most due to those brave captains, who by their wisdom and valor have freed their country from straits and oppressions. So were those judges and princes, who anciently delivered Israel from their enemies, commonly styled: 'In the time of their trouble,' say the Levites in Nehemiah, 'when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and, according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of the enemy;' so are Othniel and Ehud particularly called; and Moses signally: 'The same,' saith St. Stephen of him, 'did God send to be ἄρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτὴν, a Commander and a Saviour (or Redeemer) to the children of Israel;' for that he by a worthy and happy conduct did free them from the Egyptian slavery. And thus was Demetrius by the Athenians (for his delivering them from the Macedonian subjection, and restoring their liberty to them) entitled, εὐεργέτης καὶ σωτὴρ, a benefactor and saviour. Thus with greatest reason is Jesus so called, as being ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας, 'the Captain of Salvation,' (so he is called by the Apostle to the Hebrews,) ἀρχηγὸς ζωῆς, ('the Captain of Life,' as St.

Peter names him, the chief Leader unto eternal life,) ἀρχηγὸς πίστεως, (' the Captain of our Faith ;' he that hath revealed that saving doctrine, which is the power of God to salvation :) and these titles we have conjoined by St. Peter in the Acts ; ' Him hath God exalted, ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα, as a Captain and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins.' This he is to us several ways, by direction both instructive and exemplary ; by his protection and governance ; by his mating and quelling the enemies of man's salvation ; which things more specially and completely he hath performed in respect to faithful Christians, yet in a manner also he hath truly done them for and toward all men ; as we shall distinctly consider.

6. Jesus is ' the Saviour of all men,' we say, as having perfectly discovered and demonstrated the way and means of salvation ; the gracious purposes of God concerning it ; the duties required by God in order to it ; the great helps and encouragements to seek it ; the mighty determents from neglecting it ; the whole will of God, and concernment of man in relation thereto ; briefly, all saving truths he hath revealed unto all men : mysteries of truth, which ' were hidden from ages and generations,' which no fancy of man could invent, no understanding could reach, no reason could by discussion clear, (concerning the nature, providence, will, and purpose of God ; the nature, original, and state of man ; concerning the laws and rules of practice, the helps thereto, the rewards thereof, whatever is important for us to know in order to happiness,) he did plainly discover, and bring to light ; he did with valid sorts of demonstration assert and confirm. The doing which (as having so much efficacy toward salvation, and being ordinarily so necessary thereto,) is often called ' saving ;' as particularly by St. James ; when he saith, ' He that turns a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death.' And by St. Paul ; ' Take heed to thy word and doctrine ; for so doing thou shalt seve thyself, and thy hearers.' That our Lord hath thus (according to his design, and according to reasonable esteem,) ' saved all men,' we are authorised by the holy Scripture to say ; for he is there represented to be ' the light of the world ;' ' the true light that enlighteneth every man coming into the world :' ' the day-spring from on high, which hath visited us,

to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace.' By him 'the saving grace of God hath appeared unto all men.' By him (as Isaiah prophesied, and St. John the Baptist applied it) 'all flesh did see the salvation of God.' Of him it was also foretold, as St. Paul teacheth us, 'I have set thee for the light of the nations, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.' 'Coming he preached peace τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ τοῖς ἐγγὺς (*longe lateque*) 'to them that were far, and them that were near,' that is, 'to all men every where.' 'While I am in the world,' said he, 'I am the light of the world;' shining, like the sun, indifferently unto all; and when he withdrew his corporal presence, he farther virtually diffused his light, for he sent his messengers with a general commission and command to teach all men concerning the benefits procured for them, and the duties required from them; 'Going into the world, make all nations disciples, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.' 'Going into the world, preach the gospel unto every creature,' (or, 'to the whole creation:' so it ought to be.) 'That in his name should be preached repentance and remission of sins unto all nations.' And such was the tenor of the apostolical commission; 'Thou shalt be witness for him toward all men,' said Ananias to St. Paul. Accordingly, in compliance with those orders, did the Apostles, in God's name, instruct and admonish all men, plainly teaching, seriously inviting to, strongly persuading, and earnestly intreating all men to embrace the truth, and enjoy the benefits of the gospel, and consequently to be saved: 'The times of ignorance,' saith St. Paul, 'God having winked at, doth now invite all men every where to repent:' and, 'We are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.'—'We pray you,' you as members of that world, which God was in Christ reconciling to himself; and, 'We preach Christ—warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,' (or, 'render every man a good Christian.') Thus was the gospel, according to our Saviour's intent and order, preached, as St. Paul saith of it, ἐν πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν, 'in the whole creation under heaven;' thus did

God show that he would 'have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowlege of the truth;' whence our Lord (in regard to the nature and design of his performance in this kind) is the common Saviour, as the common master of truth, and enlightener of the world, and proclaimer of God's will to mankind.

7. If now it be inquired or objected; why then is not the gospel revealed unto all men? How comes it to pass, that no sound of this saving word, no glimpse of this heavenly light, doth arrive to many nations? How can so general and large intention consist with so particular and sparing execution? What benefit can we imagine them capable to receive from this performance of our Saviour, who still do sit in total ignorance of the gospel, in darkness, and the shadow of death? 'How can they call on him in whom they believe not? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?"

To this suggestion I answer,

1. That God's intentions are not to be interpreted, nor his performances estimated by events, depending on the contingency of human actions, but by his own declarations and precepts, together with the ordinary provision of competent means, in their own nature sufficient to produce those effects which he declares himself to intend or to perform. What he reveals himself to design, he doth really design it; what he says, that he performeth; he (according to moral esteem, that is, so far as to ground duties of gratitude and honor, proceedings of justice and reward) doth perform, although the thing on other accounts be not effected.

Thus, for instance, God would have all men to live together here in peace, in order, in health, conveniently, comfortably, cheerfully; according to reason, with virtue and justice; and in the best state toward happiness: for these purposes he hath endued them with reasonable faculties, he hath engraven on their minds a natural law, he hath furnished them with all sorts of instruments and helps conducible to those ends; he promoteth them by dispensations of providence, and probably, by internal influences of grace: yet often all those means, by the perverseness and stupidity of men, do prove ineffectual, so that wars, disorders, diseases, vices, iniquities and oppressions,

troubles and miseries, do commonly abound in the world. Likewise God desires that in his church knowlege and piety, peace and charity, and good order should grow and flourish; to which purposes he hath appointed teachers to instruct, and governors to watch over his people: he hath obliged each man to advise and admonish his brother; he hath declared holy precepts and rules of practice; he hath propounded vast encouragements and rewards, and threatened dreadful punishments; he hath promised and doth afford requisite assistances; being himself always present and ready to promote those ends by his grace: yet notwithstanding, by the voluntary neglect or abuse of these means, (the guides being blind, negligent, unfaithful; or the people being indocile, sluggish, refractory; or both perverted with bad affections,) often ignorance, error, and impiety prevail, love is cool and dead, schisms and factions are rife in the church. Which events are not to be conceived derogatory to God's good-will and good intentions, or to his kind and careful providence toward men; but we are notwithstanding to esteem and acknowlege him the author and donor of those good things; in respect to them no less blessing and praising him, than if they were really accomplished by man's concurrence and compliance; he having done his part in that due measure and manner which wisdom prompts; having indeed done the same, as when they are effected. So God having expressly declared that he would have all men to know and embrace the gospel, having made a universal promulgation thereof, having sent forth apostles to disseminate it every where, having obliged every man to confer his best endeavor toward the propagation thereof; if by the want of fidelity, zeal, or industry in them, to whom this care is intrusted, or on whom this duty is incumbent; or if by the carelessness and stupidity of those, who do not regard what is done in the world; or if by men's voluntary shutting their eyes, or stopping their ears, (as the Jews did of old to the prophetical instructions and admonitions,) God's heavenly truth becometh not universally known, it is not reasonable to impute this defailance to God, or to conceive him therefore not universally to desire and design men's instruction and salvation consequent thereon. Let me, for the illustration of this matter, put a case, or propound a similitude.

Suppose a great kingdom, consisting of several provinces, should have revolted from their sovereign; disclaiming his authority, neglecting and disobeying his laws; that the good prince, out of his goodness and pity toward them, (and on other good considerations moving him thereto, suppose the mediation of his own son,) instead of prosecuting them with deserved vengeance, should grant a general pardon and amnesty, in these terms, or on these conditions; that whoever of those rebels willingly should come in, acknowlege his fault, and promise future loyalty, or obedience to his laws declared to them, should be received into favor, have impunity, enjoy protection, and obtain rewards from him. Farther, for the effectuating this gracious intent, suppose that he should appoint and commissionate messengers, empowering and charging them to divulge the purport of this act of grace to all the people of that kingdom. Admit now, that these messengers should go forth and seat themselves only in some provinces of that kingdom, proclaiming this universal pardon (universal as to the design, and as to the tenor thereof) only in those, neglecting others; or that striving to propagate it farther, they should be rejected and repelled; or that from any the like cause the knowlege thereof should not reach to some remoter provinces; it is plain that indeed the effect of that pardon would be obstructed by such a carriage of the affair; but the tenor of that act would not thereby be altered; nor would the failure in execution (consequent on the ministers' or the people's misbehavior) detract from the real amplitude of the prince's intent; no more than the wilful incredulity, refusal, or non-compliance of some persons, where the business is promulged and notified, would prejudice the same. It is plain the prince meant favorably toward all, and provided carefully for them; although by accident (not imputable to him) the designed favors and benefits do not reach all. The case so plainly suits our purpose, that I need not make any application. The holy fathers do by several like similitudes endeavor to illustrate this matter, and somewhat to assoil the difficulty. They compare our Saviour to the sun, who shines indifferently to all the world, although there be some private corners and secret caves, to which his light doth not come; although some shut their windows or

their eyes, and exclude it; although some are blind, and do not see it. That mystical Sun of Righteousness, saith St. Ambrose, is risen to all, came to all, did suffer and rose again for all—but if any one doth not believe in Christ, he defrauds himself of the general benefit. As if one shutting the windows should exclude the beams of the sun, the sun is not therefore not risen to all. They compare our Lord to a physician, who professes to relieve and cure all that shall have recourse to his help; but doth cure only those who seek for remedy, and are willing to take the medicine; because all, saith St. Ambrose again, do not desire cure, but most do shun it, lest the ulcer should smart by medicaments; therefore *volentes curat, non astringit invitos;* he cures only the willing, doth not compel those that are unwilling; they only receive health, who desire medicine. Evangelical grace, say they, is like a fountain standing openly, to which all men have free access; at which all men may quench their thirst, if they will inquire after it, and go thereto. 'The fountain of life,' saith Arnobius, 'is open to all; nor is any man hindered or driven from the right of drinking it.' The covenant of grace is, say they, a door standing open to all, whereinto all have liberty to enter. 'When an entrance,' saith St. Chrysostom, 'being opened to all, and there being nothing that hinders, some being wilfully naught abide without, they have no other but their own wickedness to impute their destruction unto.'

And again he puts the question, 'If Christ enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, how is it that so many remain unenlightened?' &c. To which he answers, 'That if some, wilfully shutting the eyes of their minds, will not receive the beams of this light, it is not from the nature of light that those remain still in darkness, but from the wickedness of those who wilfully deprive themselves of the gift of it,' &c.

St. Gregory Nazianzen resembles the grace of baptism (as to its community and freedom of use) to the breathing of the air, to the spreading of light, to the vicissitude of seasons, to the aspect of the creation; things most obvious and common to all.

If this answer do not fully satisfy, I adjoin farther,

2. That God, beside that ordinary provision, is ready to in-

terpose extraordinarily in disclosing his truth to them who are worthy of such favor, and fit to receive it; and that God's general desire and design of revealing his truth to all men is very well consistent with his providential (not only negative and permissive, but even positive and active) withholding the discovery thereof from some persons, yea some nations; for that neither his wisdom, goodness, or justice might permit him, that he should impart that revelation to such persons whom he seeth altogether indisposed to comply therewith, and unfit to profit thereby; who have extremely abused the lesser graces, and not improved or misimproved the lesser talents afforded them; detained inferior truths in unrighteousness, and 'have not liked to retain God in their knowlege,' have therefore justly been delivered up to a reprobate sense; who have so depraved their minds with wicked prejudices and affections, that the truth being offered to them, they would certainly either stupidly neglect it, or scornfully reject it; or if admitting it in show, would unworthily abuse it; so that from the imparting the means of knowing it, no glory to God, no benefit to man would accrue, but rather contempt of God and prejudice to men would ensue on it; there are some persons of that wicked and gigantic disposition, (contracted by evil practice,) that, should one offer to instruct them in truth, or move them to piety, would be ready to say with Polyphemus in Homer, *Odyss. ι'.* 273, 4.

> Νήπιος εἶς, ὦ ξεῖν', ἢ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας,
> Ὅς με θεοὺς κέλεαι ἢ δείδιμεν, ἢ ἀλέασθαι.
>
> Friend, you are a fool, or a great stranger to me,
> Who advisest me to fear or regard the Deity.

Or (which is the same) with Pharaoh: 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go,' (or neither will I do as you in God's name admonish me;) who, like that unhappy prince, by no efficacy of arguments, no wonders of power are to be convinced of their folly, or converted from their wickedness: some, like those of Chorazin and Bethsaida, whom not all the powerful discourses spoken to them, all the mighty works done in them, sufficient to have brought Tyre and Sidon to repentance, can induce to

mind or obey the truth: unto which sort of people (except on some particular occasions, and for special reasons) it is not expedient that divine truth should be exposed. We may also observe how our Lord being asked by St. Jude a question like to ours; 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not to the world?' thus resolves it: 'If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him:' implying the ordinary reason of God's making a difference in the discoveries of himself to be the previous disposition and behaviors of men toward God; and interpretatively toward our Lord himself.

That God doth commonly observe this method (plainly suitable to divine justice, wisdom, and goodness;) to dispense the revelation of his truth according to men's disposition to receive it, and aptness to make a fruitful and worthy use of it, 'to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance,' as St. John Baptist spake; and to withhold it from those who are indisposed to admit it, or unfit to profit by it; we may from divers express passages and notable instances (beside many probable intimations) of Scripture learn. We may on the one hand observe that those whom our Saviour did choose to call, were persons disposed easily on his call to comply; to forsake their fathers and their nets; to leave their receipts of custom; to relinquish all, (relations, occupations, estates,) and to follow him; faithful Israelites, without guile, like Nathaniel, (that is, as is probably conjectured, St. Bartholomew;) men honestly devout, and charitable, like Zaccheus; that he chose to converse with publicans and sinners, men apt to be convinced of their errors, and touched with the sense of their sins; apt to see their need of mercy and grace, and therefore ready to entertain the overtures of them; that he blesses God for revealing his mysteries to babes, (to innocent and well meaning, imprejudicate and uncorrupted persons,) such as if men were not, they could in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven, or become Christians; those 'poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of heaven;' those foolish things which God chooses as most fit objects of his mercy and grace; that he enjoined his disciples, in their travels for the promulgation and propagation of the gospel, to inquire concerning the

worthiness or fitness of the persons, and accordingly to make more close applications to them: 'Into what city or village ye enter, inquire who therein is worthy;' and entering in abide there. Of this proceeding we have a notable instance in Cornelius, who for his honest piety (correspondent to the proportion of knowlege vouchsafed him) was so acceptable to God, that in regard thereto he obtained from him the revelation of truth in a peculiar and extraordinary manner. And St. Paul was another most remarkable example thereof; who for the like reason was so wonderfully called, as himself intimates, describing himself to have been ζηλωτὴς Θεοῦ, 'zealously affected toward God, according to the righteousness in the law, blameless;' one that had 'continually behaved himself with all good conscience toward God;' who even in the persecution of God's truth did proceed with an honest meaning, and according to his conscience, for which cause he saith that God had mercy on him; foreseeing how willingly he would embrace the truth, and how earnestly promote it. We may also observe, how in the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit commonly directed the Apostles to such places, where a competent number of people were well disposed to receive the truth; who were εὔθετοι εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'well disposed to the kingdom of heaven,' and consequently by God's foresight (τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον) 'ordained to have the word of eternal life' (the τὸ σωτηρίον Θεοῦ, as it is in a parallel place called) discovered to them; such people as the Bereans, men ingenuous and tractable; who consequently entertained the word, μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, with all promptitude and alacrity. To such persons God sometimes by extraordinary revelation directed the Apostles to preach; as to the Corinthians, in respect to whom the Lord spake to St. Paul in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, but speak, and be not silent; for I am with thee, because πολύς ἐστί μοι λαὸς, there is for me much people in this city;' much people whom I see disposed to comply with my truth. So in behalf of the Macedonians, ἀνήρ τις Μακεδὼν, 'a certain man of Macedonia,' was in a vision seen to St. Paul, 'exhorting him and saying, Passing into Macedonia, help us.' Thus on that hand doth God take special care that his truth be manifested to such as are fitly qualified to embrace it and use it well: thus is God

ready to make good that answer of Pothinus, (Bishop of Lions, and immediate successor to St. Iræneus) to the prefect, who asking him, 'Who was the Christians' God,' was answered, 'Ἐὰν ᾖς ἄξιος γνώσῃ, 'If thou be worthy, thou shalt know;' thus, as the wise man divinely saith, the divine wisdom, ἀξίους αὐτῆς περιέρχεται ζητοῦσα, 'goeth about seeking such as are worthy of her; showeth herself favorable unto them in their ways, and meeteth them in every thought.'

And on the other hand, that God withholds the special discoveries of his truth, on account of men's indispositions and demerits, may likewise very plainly appear. We may suppose our Lord to have observed himself, what he ordered to his disciples; 'Not to give that which is holy to dogs, nor to cast their pearls before swine,' (not to expose the holy and precious truth to very lewd and fierce people, who would snarl at it and trample on it:) we may allow God in his dispensation of his truth and grace to do what he bids the Apostles to do: before he enters into any house, or applies himself to any person, to examine whether the house or person be worthy, that is, willing to receive him, and apt to treat him well; if not, to decline them. Our Lord, we see, did leave even his own country, seeing men there were not disposed to use him with due honor and regard; seeing they were possessed with vain prejudices, apt to obstruct the efficacy of his divine instructions and miraculous performances; so that he was not likely (according to the ordinary way of divine providence) to produce any considerable effect towards their conversion. 'He could not,' it is said, 'do many miracles there, because of their unbelief;' he could not, that is, according to the most just and wise rules he did observe, he would not do them; because he perceived the doing them would not conduce to any good purpose; that they were not apt to look on those works as the effects of divine power and goodness, performed for their benefit, (for inducing them to faith and repentance,) but rather that the doing them would expose God's mercy to contempt or reproach, at least to neglect or disregard. Hence our Saviour declined conversing with persons indisposed to (those ψυχικοὶ, who cannot δέχεσθαι τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος) receive benefit by his instruction and example; to grow wiser or better by his conversation;

as the pharisees and scribes; men prepossessed with corrupt opinions and vicious affections, obstructive to the belief of his doctrine and observance of his laws; and worldly persons; proud and selfconceited, crafty and deceitful, covetous, ambitious, and worldly men, incorrigibly tinctured with that *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*, 'carnal wisdom and affection;' which 'is enmity to God; so that it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be;' inextricably engaged in the friendship of the world; which is enmity to God: to such men the gospel would certainly be a scandal or a folly: they would never be able to relish or digest the doctrine of purity, self-denial, patience, and the like doctrines opposite to carnal sense and conceit which it teacheth. From such wise and prudent men (conceited of their little wisdoms, and doting on their own fancies) God did conceal those heavenly mysteries, which they would have despised and derided: those 'many wise according to the flesh, many powerful, many noble,' God did not choose to call into his church. Accordingly we may observe in the history of the Apostles, that God's Spirit did prohibit the Apostles passing through some places, it discerning how unsuccessful (at those seasons, in those circumstances, according to those dispositions of men) their preaching would be: 'Passing through Phrygia and Galatia, being hindered by the Spirit to speak the word in Asia; coming to Mysia, they essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.' Moreover there is plainly the like reason why God should withhold his saving truth from some people, as why he should withdraw it from others; when it is abused or proves fruitless: but of such withdrawing we have many plain instances, attended with the declaration of the reasons of them: our Lord prophesied thus concerning the Jews; 'I say unto you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation doing the fruits thereof;' they, when our Saviour would have gathered them under his wings, wilfully refusing. Our Lord charged his disciples, when by any they were repulsed or neglected in their preaching, to leave those persons and places, 'shaking off the dust from their feet,' in token of an utter (*εἰς μαρτύριον ἐπ' αὐτοὺς*) detestation and desertion of them: and accordingly we see them practising in their Acts; when they perceived men perversely con-

tradictious, or desperately senseless and stupid, so that they clamored against the gospel, and thrust it from them, they abstained from farther dealing with them, turning their endeavors otherwhere, toward persons of a more docile and ingenuous temper; thence more susceptive of faith and repentance: 'To you,' say Paul and Barnabas to the contradicting and reproachful Jews, 'it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken; but seeing you put it from you, (or thrust it away from you, *ἀπωθεῖσθε αὐτὸν*,) and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, we turn to the Gentiles.' So when the church of Ephesus was grown cold in charity, and deficient in good works, God threatens to remove her candlestick; or to withdraw from her that light of truth, which shone with so little beneficial influence. It seems evident that God for the like reasons may withhold the discovery of his truth, or forbear to interpose his providence; so as to transmit light thither, where men's deeds are so evil, that they will love darkness rather than light; where their eyes are so dim and weak, that the light will but offend, and by the having it, hurt them; where they, by the having it declared to them, will only incur farther mischief and misery; it would prove to them but *ὀσμὴ θανάτου*, a 'deadly scent,' as the most comfortable perfumes are offensive sometimes and noxious to distempered bodies. Wherefore as where the light doth shine most clearly, it is men's voluntary pravity, that by it many are not effectually brought to salvation; so it is men's voluntary depraving and corrupting themselves, (misusing their natural light, choking the seeds of natural ingenuity, thwarting God's secret whispers and motions, complying with the suggestions of the wicked one,) so as to be rendered unmeet for the susception of God's heavenly truth and grace, which hinders God (who proceedeth ordinarily with men, in sweet and reasonable methods, not in way of impetuous violence and coaction) from dispensing them: we may say of such in the words of the prophet, 'They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.' 'Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.' *Τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀγαθότητι πᾶσιν ὁ Κύριος ἐγγίζει· μακρύνομεν δὲ ἑαυτοὺς ἡμεῖς διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας*, 'God doth by his goodness approach to all,

but we set ourselves at distance by sin,' saith St. Basil; and *ὅπου αὐτοπροαίρετος πονηρία, ἐκεῖ καὶ ἀποχὴ τῆς χάριτος*, 'where there is self-chosen or affected wickedness, there is a withholding of grace,' saith another Father, (apud Cyrill. Hier.) The gospel, if it be hidden, it is, as St. Paul says, hidden *ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, in viris perditis*, among lost men, (that is, men desperately gone in wickedness, incorrigible, unreclaimable people,) 'in whom the God of this world (that is, as St. Chrysostom expounds it, not the devil, but the good God himself) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, so that the light of the glorious gospel hath not shined to them,' (*πῶς οὖν ἐτύφλωσεν*; 'how then did God blind them?' saith St. Chrysostom,) *οὐκ ἐνεργήσας εἰς τοῦτο, ἄπαγε*· 'not by any efficacy of his on them toward that; fie on that;' *ἀλλ' ἀφεὶς καὶ συγχωρήσας*, 'but by permission and concession;' for so the Scripture is wont to speak; *Ἐπειδὰν γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἠπίστησαν πρῶτοι, καὶ ἀναξίους ἑαυτοὺς κατεσκεύασαν τοῦ ἰδεῖν τὰ μυστήρια, καὶ αὐτὸς λοιπὸν εἴασεν· ἀλλὰ τί ἔδει ποιῆσαι; πρὸς βίαν ἕλκειν, καὶ ἐκκαλύπτειν μὴ βουλομένοις ἰδεῖν; ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἂν κατεφρόνησαν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἶδον.* 'Seeing,' saith he, 'they disbelieved first, and constituted themselves unworthy to see the mysteries, even God at last let them alone; for what should he have done? Should he have drawn them violently, and discovered it to them being unwilling to see? They would then have more despised it, and not have seen it.' God is ever willing and ready to dispense his mercies and favors, but he is not wont to do it extraordinarily, (or beside the course of his ordinary provision,) but in a proper and fit season, (in that *καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος*, 'acceptable time and day of salvation,' when he seeth men capable of receiving them;) which season commonly dependeth on man's will and choice, or the results of them. *Καθόλου γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς οἶδεν τούς τε ἀξίους τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ μή· ὅθεν τὰ προσήκοντα ἑκάστοις δίδωσιν. Σωτὴρ γάρ ἐστιν· οὐχὶ τῶν μὲν, τῶν δ' οὔ· πρὸς δ' ὅσον ἐπιτηδειότητος ἕκαστος εἶχεν, τὴν ἑαυτοῦ διένειμεν εὐεργεσίαν*· for (saith Clemens Alex. in his 7th of the Stromata, where he clearly and fully affirms our present doctrine) 'Our Lord is not the Saviour of some and not of others: but, according as men are fitly disposed, he hath distributed his beneficence to all.' St. Augustine himself somewhere speaketh no less; or rather

more: *Præcedit aliquid in peccatoribus*, saith he, *quo, quamvis nondum sint justificati, digni efficiantur justificatione: et idem præcedit in aliis peccatoribus quo digni sint obtusione.* But,

3. If all these considerations do not thoroughly satisfy us concerning the reason of God's proceedings in this case, we may consider that God's providence is inscrutable and impenetrable to us; that, according to the psalmist, as 'God's mercy is in the heavens, and his faithfulness reacheth to the clouds;' so 'his righteousness is like the great mountains,' (too high for our reason to climb,) 'and his judgments,' πολλὴ ἄβυσσος, a great abyss, too deep for our feeble understanding to fathom; that his ways are more subtile and spiritual than to be traced by our dim and gross sight. So on contemplation of a like case, although, as it seems, hardly so obscure or unaccountable as this, the case concerning God's conditional rejection of that people, whom he in a special manner had so much and so long favored, St. Paul himself doth profess. That therefore although we cannot fully resolve the difficulty, we notwithstanding without distrust should adhere to those positive and plain declarations, whereby God representeth himself seriously designing and earnestly desiring, 'That all men should come to the knowlege of the truth; that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance;' not doubting but his declared mind, and his secret providence, although we cannot thoroughly discern or explain their consistency, do yet really and fully conspire. But no farther at this time.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXXIV.

I TIMOTHY, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 10.

8. As our Saviour was such to all men by his doctrine, or the general discovery of all saving truth; so may he be esteemed such in regard to his exemplary practice, whereby on the open stage of the world, and in the view of all that would attend to him, he represented a living pattern of all goodness; by imitating which we may certainly attain to salvation. He that will consider that practice, shall find it admirably fitted for general instruction and imitation, calculated for all places and all people: this topic enlarged on.

9. Jesus is *the Saviour of all men*, as having combated and vanquished all the enemies of man's welfare and happiness; enabling us also to withstand and overcome them. Man's enemies described, together with our Lord's suitable and efficacious methods of subduing them.

The Devil, that *adversary*, &c., who usurped and exercised a domination over mankind, as the *prince of the world*.

The world itself, whose *friendship is enmity with God*.

The flesh, which *lusts against the spirit*.

Our sins, which are very grievous enemies, loading us with guilt, and stinging us with remorse.

Our conscience, which is an enemy, accusing us, and condemning us for sin.

The Law, which in its rigor, as requiring exact obedience, and our inability perfectly to observe it, was our enemy.

Death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, and which most we fear.

Lastly, *Hell*, the most dismal of all our enemies, which our Lord, by virtue of his merits and power of his grace, has enabled us to avoid.

Application of the whole. 1. There ariseth hence great matter and cause for glorifying God, both from the thing itself and its extent. 2. Hereby is discovered the general obligation to love God, to praise and serve him, out of gratitude for his goodness, &c. 3. This doctrine affords great matter of comfort. If a man, reflecting on his own heart and ways, is apt to be discouraged, yet it will raise him to consider that he is not excluded from a possibility of salvation, seeing that he is assured of God's favorable inclination. 4. It is a great incitement to the performance of duty; both as disposing men to serve God out of an ingenuous or grateful disposition, and as assuring them of acceptance in case of their endeavors to obey: this enlarged on. 5. It is a great aggravation of infidelity, apostacy, and of all disobedience, so to frustrate the designs of Christ, reject his grace, and abuse his mercy: it consequently tends to deter men from these sins. 6. It is a great encouragement and excitement to devotion; for who can be backward from using the mediation of so merciful and kind a Redeemer? whom will not such goodness invite and encourage? 7. It is a ground and motive of charity, as thence arises a more considerable relation between all men. 8. It should consequently render us careful to promote the salvation of others, and fearful to hinder it by bad example, or doctrine, &c. 9. It is a piece of justice to acknowlege the right and interest of every man in his Saviour: this enlarged on to the end.

SERMON LXXIV.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

I TIMOTHY, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 10.

——The living God; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.

8. As our Saviour was such to all men by his doctrine, or the general discovery of all saving truth; so may he be esteemed such in regard to his exemplary practice; whereby on the open stage of the world, and in the common view of all that would attend unto him, he did represent a living pattern of all goodness; by imitating which we may certainly attain salvation. He that will consider his practice shall find it admirably fitted for general instruction and imitation; calculated for all places and all sorts of people; suited to the complexions, to the capacities, to the degrees, to the callings of all men; so that every sort of men may from it draw profitable direction, may in it find a copy, even of his particular behavior: for he was a great prince, illustrious in birth, excellent in glory, and abounding in all wealth; yet was born in obscurity, lived without pomp, and seemed to possess nothing; so teaching men of high rank to be sober, mild, and humble; not to rest in, not to regard much, not to hug and cling to the accommodations and shows of worldly state; teaching those of mean degree to be patient, content, and cheerful in their station. He was exceedingly wise and knowing, without bound or measure; yet made no ostentation of extraordinary knowlege, of sharp wit,

of deep subtilty; did not vent high, dark, or intricate notions; had in his practice no reaches and windings of craft or policy; but was in his doctrine very plain and intelligible, in his practice very open and clear; so that what he commonly said or did, not only philosophers and statesmen, but almost the simplest idiots might easily comprehend; so that those might thence learn not to be conceited of their superfluous wisdom; these not be discouraged in their harmless ignorance; both having thence an equally sufficient instruction in all true righteousness, a complete direction in the paths to happiness, being thereby σοφιζόμενοι εἰς σωτηρίαν, made wise and learned to salvation. He did not immerse himself in the cares, nor engage himself into the businesses of this world; yet did not withdraw himself from the company and conversation of men: he retired often from the crowd, that he might converse with God and heavenly things; he put himself into it, that he might impart good to men, and benefit the world, declining no sort of society; but indifferently conversing with all; disputing with the doctors, and eating with the publicans; whence thereby both men of contemplative and quiet dispositions or vocations, and men of busy spirits, or of active lives, may be guided respectively; those not to be morose, supercilious, rigid, contemptuous toward other men; these not to be so possessed or entangled with the world, as not to reserve some leisure for the culture of their minds, not to employ some care on the duty of piety and devotion; both may learn, whether in private retirements, or in public conversation and employment, especially to regard the service of God and the benefit of men: thus was the example of our Lord accommodated for all men; especially conducting them in the hardest and roughest parts of the way leading to bliss, the acclivities and asperities of duty; self-denial, or neglect of worldly glory and fleshly pleasure, patience, humility, general charity; showing us the possibility of performing such duties, and encouraging us thereto. Through these difficult and dangerous passages (as a resolute chieftain of life) he undauntedly marched before us, charging, beating back, and breaking through all opposite forces, all enemies, all temptations, all obstacles; enduring painfully the most furious assaults of the world; boldly withstanding and happily

conquering the most malicious rage of hell; so that victory and salvation we shall be certain of, if we pursue his steps, and do not basely (out of faintness or falsehood) desert so good a leader; we shall not fail of the unfading crown, if 'with patience we run the race that is set before us, looking unto the captain and perfecter of our faith, Jesus, who, for the joy proposed unto him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Would it not raise and inflame any courage to see his commander to adventure so boldly on all hazards, to endure so willingly all hardships? Whom would not the sight of such a forerunner animate and quicken in his course; who, by running in the straight way of righteousness with alacrity and constancy, hath obtained himself a most glorious crown, and holdeth forth another like thereto, for the reward of those who follow him? Now as our Lord's doctrine, so did his example, in the nature and design thereof, respect and appertain to all men, it being also like the light of heaven, a common spectacle, a public guide, 'to guide our steps in the way of peace:' if it do not appear so, if it do not effectually direct all, it is by accident and beside God's intention; it is by the fault of them who should propound it, or of them who have not eyes fit or worthy to behold it; briefly, what was said concerning the universal revelation of Christian doctrine may be applied to Christ's practice.

9. Jesus is 'the Saviour of all men,' as having combated and vanquished all the enemies of man's welfare and happiness; dispossessing them of all their pretences and usurpations over man, disarming them of all their power and force against him; enabling us to withstand and overcome them. Man's salvation hath many adversaries of different nature and kind; some directly oppugning it, some formally prejudicing it, some accidentally hindering it; some alluring, some forcing, some discouraging from it, or from the means conducing to it: the chief of them we may from the Scripture (with consent of experience) reckon to be the devil, with all his envy and malice, his usurpations, his delusions, and his temptations to sin; the world, with its snares and baits, its violences, persecutions, and menaces; the flesh, or natural concupiscence with its bad inclinations and propensities to evil, its lusts

and pleasures; sin, with its guilt, and mischievous consequences; the law, with its rigorous exactions, hard measure, and harsh boding; conscience, with its accusations and complaints, its terrors and anguishes; divine anger, with its effects, death and hell. All these our Lord hath in several and suitable ways defeated; as to their malignity, contrariety, or enmity in respect of man's salvation; he hath, as Zachariah prophesieth in his Benedictus, 'saved us from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us: so that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might (ἀφόβως) safely and securely, without danger or fear, serve him, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.'

The devil, (that enemy, that adversary, that accuser, that slanderer, that murderer, that greedy lion, that crafty serpent, the strong one, the mischievous one, the destroyer,) who usurped an authority, and exercised a domination over mankind, as 'the prince of this world;' who made prize of them, 'captivated them at his pleasure;' who detained them under the power (or authority) of darkness and wickedness; who had the power of death; him our Saviour hath destroyed or defeated, (καταργησεν, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh; that is, abolished him as to any farther pretence of empire or power over us;) him he hath dejected from heaven, ('I saw Satan like lightning falling down from heaven;') him he hath cast out: 'Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out:' all 'his works he hath dissolved:' 'For this cause,' saith St. John, 'the Son of God did appear, that he might dissolve the works of the devil.' He combated this strong one, (this mighty and dreadful foe of ours,) and baffled him, and bound him, and disarmed him, (taking away πανοπλίαν αὐτοῦ, the whole armor in which he trusted,) and spoiled him, (τὰ σκεύη διήρπασε, 'rifled all his baggage,' bare away all his instruments of mischief,) and plundered all his house; leaving him unable (without our fault, our baseness, our negligence) to do us mischief, (as is intimated in the 12th of St. Matthew, and 11th of St. Luke; yea, he triumphed over all those infernal principalities and powers, and exposed them, as St. Paul saith: he imparted to his disciples ability to 'trample on all his power,' by him all his followers are so fortified as

'to conquer the wicked one,' as St. John says: he affordeth light to 'discover all his wiles and snares,' strength and courage to withstand all his assaults, to repel all his fiery darts, to put him to flight.

The world also (that is, the wicked principles, the bad customs, the naughty conversation and example which commonly prevail here among men; alluring to evil and deterring from good; the cares also, the riches, the pleasures, the glories of the world, which possess or distract the minds, satiate and cloy the desires, employ all the affections and endeavors, take up the time of men; all in the world which fasteneth our hearts to earth, and to these low transitory things; or which sink them down toward hell; and which detain them from soaring toward heaven) is an enemy, an irreconcilable enemy to our salvation; the friendship thereof being inconsistent with a friendship in us toward the God of our salvation; or in him toward us: for 'the friendship of the world is enmity with God;' and, 'If any man love the world, the friendship of the Father is not in him.' And this enemy our Lord hath vanquished, and enabled us to overcome. 'Be of courage,' saith he, 'I have overcome the world:' he, by a constant self-denial and temperance, defeated the bewitching pleasures and flattering glories of it; he, by an immovable patience, baffled the terrible frowns and outrageous violences of it; he, by a resolute and invincible maintenance of truth, in great measure routed and dissipated the errors and oppositions thereof; he, by a general and intense charity, surmounted the provocations, envies, and enmities thereof; he did it himself for us, and he also enabled us to do it; furnishing us with sufficient strength, and fit weapons, whereby we may combat and conquer it; may sustain and repel its force; may shun and elude its baits; for 'every one that (by faith in him) is born of God, doth overcome the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith: Who is he that overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?' In all these things (that is, in whatever concerns the world and its enmity; tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword) 'we are,' saith St. Paul, 'more than conquerors through him that loves us;' 'thanks be to God, which always

causeth us to triumph in Christ:' our Lord hath procured for us hopes that will raise our minds and affections above the world; objects employing our care and endeavor far beyond it; satisfactions that will cheer our hearts, and satiate our desires without it; comforts that will support and sustain our spirits against all the terrors, all the assaults, all the evils thereof; by his means it is, that we have no reason either to love it, or to fear it, or to value it, or to be concerned about it; but to contemn it as a thing unworthy of us and below us.

The flesh also (that is, all that within us of bodily temper, or natural constitution, which inclineth and swayeth us to vicious excess in sensual enjoyments; which disposeth us to the inordinate love of ourselves, and of other creatures; which 'lusts against the spirit,' and is adversary thereto; which blindeth and darkeneth our minds in the apprehension of our judgment concerning divine things; which perverteth and disableth (enfeebleth) our wills in the choice and prosecution of what is good; which discomposeth and disordereth the affections and passions of our souls; which continually enticeth and seduceth us to sin) is also an enemy; a very powerful, very treacherous, very dangerous, and very mischievous enemy to us and our welfare; rendering us enemies to God, (for 'the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,') being 'another law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and captivating us to the law of sin;' engendering and fostering those 'fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;' whose works and fruits are all sorts of intemperance, impurity, pride, envy, contentiousness; this capital enemy of ours our Lord did in his own person first subdue, rejecting all the suggestions and thwarting the impulses thereof; intirely submitting to and performing the will of God; even in willingly drinking that cup, which was so distasteful, so grievous to natural will and fleshly desire. He so conquered the flesh in himself for us; he also conquers it in us, by the guidance and assistance of his grace enabling us to withstand it, and to overcome it. 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,' saith St. Paul, 'hath freed me from the law of sin and death.' He infuses a light discussing those fogs which stream from carnal sense and appetite; so that we may

clearly discern divine truths, the will of God, the way to happiness: he inserteth principles of spiritual life and strength, counterpoising and overswaying corporeal and sensual propensions; so that we can restrain sensual desires, and compose irregular passions, and submit readily to God's will, and observe cheerfully God's law, and freely comply with the dictates of the Spirit, or of right reason; he so continually aideth, encourageth and upholds us, that we 'can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us;' so that by his power and help 'the flesh with its affections and lusts are crucified;' the 'earthly members are mortified;' 'the old man (which was corrupted according to deceitful lusts) is put off;' 'the body of sin is so destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;' 'sin doth not reign in our mortal bodies, so that we (must) obey it in the lusts thereof;' 'we are renewed in the spirit of our minds;' and 'do put on the new man, which is created according to God in righteousness and true holiness.'

Our sins also are very grievous enemies of ours, loading us with heavy guilt, stinging us with bitter remorse and anxious fear, keeping us under miserable bondage, exposing us to extreme mischief and misery; them our Lord hath also routed and vanquished: in regard to this performance was the name Jesus assigned to him; as the angel told Joseph: 'She shall bear a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins:' [From their sins; taking in all the causes and the consequences of them; from all those spiritual enemies, which draw us, or drive us into them; from the guilt and obnoxiousness to punishment, the terror and anguish of conscience, the wrath and displeasure of God following on them, the slavery under their dominion, the final condemnation and sufferance of grievous pains for them;] the guilt of sin he particularly freed us from: for 'he loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' Christ died for sinners, (for us then being sinners,) that is, that he might deliver us from our sins, with all their causes, adjuncts, and consequences. 'He bare our sins in his own body on the tree;' 'the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin;' 'he is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world;' 'he was manifested to take away our sins;' 'once in the end of the world hath he appeared

to put away sin' (*εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας*, 'to the abolition of sin') 'by the sacrifice of himself;' we are 'justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;' 'by his obedience many are constituted righteous,' (or free from the guilt and imputation of sin;) 'he justifies the ungodly; covering their sins, and not imputing them unto them.' So doth he wipe away the guilt of sin; and he voids the condemnation passed for them; for 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;' 'who is there that can condemn, since Christ hath died, or rather hath risen again?'

He hath also appeased God's wrath for sin, and removed the effects of it, (the punishment and vengeance due to sin and threatened for it:) so that 'being enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;' 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:' Jesus is the *ὁ ῥυόμενος*, 'who delivers us from the wrath to come;' 'being justified by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath.'

The strength and dominion of sin he hath also broken, by the grace afforded us, whereby we are able to resist and avoid it: so that 'sin henceforth shall not domineer over us, or reign in our mortal body:' 'Being freed from sin, we are enslaved to righteousness, and made servants to God.' 'The body of sin is destroyed, so that we no longer serve sin.' Whence consequently he hath subdued, utterly weakened, or quite destroyed (as to any force or mischievous influence on us) those other adversaries, which depend on sin, and by its power oppose and afflict us.

Our conscience is such an enemy in accusing us, condemning us, vexing us, with the memory and sense of sin; suggesting to us the depth of our guilt, and the danger of our state, terrifying us with the expectation of punishment and vengeance: but our Lord (by securing us of mercy and favor on repentance and sincere obedience) hath silenced and stilled this adversary; hath 'by his blood,' as the Apostle to the Hebrews says, 'purged our conscience from dead works; hath delivered them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage;' so that thence we obtain a steady peace of mind, a joyful satisfaction in the service of God, a comfortable hope

of future bliss: peace, comfort, and joy are the adjuncts of that state he shall put us into, and the fruits of that spirit he bestoweth on us.

The law also (in its rigor, as requiring exact obedience, and as denouncing vengeance to them who in any point violate it) is, by reason of our weakness and inability so perfectly to observe it, an enemy to us; justifying no man, perfecting no man, causing, increasing, aggravating, quickening, declaring sin: 'yielding occasion to sin of killing us, working wrath, ministering death and condemnation, subjecting us to a curse,' as St. Paul teacheth us; but our Lord, by mitigating and abating the extreme rigor thereof, by procuring an acceptance of sincere (though not accurate) obedience, by purchasing and dispensing pardon for transgression thereof on repentance, by conferring competent strength and ability to perform it in an acceptable degree, hath brought under this adversary; hath 'redeemed us from the curse of the law;' hath 'justified and imputed righteousness to us without the works of the law,' (without such punctual performances as the law exacts:) we are 'delivered from the law,' (as to those effects of it; the condemning, discouraging, enslaving us,) we cease to be under the law, (in those respects,) being under grace, being led by the spirit, as St. Paul tells us. The law indeed is still our rule, our guide, our governor; we are obliged to follow and obey it; but it ceases to be a tyrant over us, a tormentor of us.

Death is also an enemy, ('The last enemy,' saith St. Paul, 'which shall be destroyed, is death,') the enemy, which naturally we most fear and abominate; that which would utterly destroy us.

This enemy our Lord hath vanquished and destroyed: by his death and resurrection he opened the way to a happy immortality; 'he abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel:' He by his 'death defeated him that had the power of death;' 'and delivered them, who by fear of death were through their whole life subject to bondage;' he pulled out sin, which is the sting of death, and reversed the sentence of condemnation, to which we all stood obnoxious. 'The wages of sin (that which we had deserved,

and was by law due to us for it) was death; but the gift of God is everlasting life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Lastly, Hell, (that is, utter darkness, extreme discomfort, intolerable and endless misery,) the most dismal of all enemies, our Lord hath, by the virtue of his merits, and the power of his grace, put us into a capacity of avoiding; 'He hath,' as St. Paul before told us, 'delivered us from the wrath to come.' 'O Hell, where is thy victory?' 'Death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire.'

Thus hath our Lord in our behalf vanquished and defeated every thing that is opposite or prejudicial to our salvation and welfare. Many indeed of these things do in a more immediate, more peculiar, and more signal manner concern the faithful members of the Christian church, and are directly applied to them; yet all of them in some sort, according to God's design, and in respect to a remote capacity, may be referred to all men. They are benefits which God intended for all men, and which all men (if they be not faulty and wanting to themselves) may obtain. How they more especially appertain to the faithful, we may show afterward.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence ariseth great matter and cause of glorifying God; both from the thing itself and its extent; for the magnitude of beneficence is to be estimated, not only according to the degree of quality, but according to its amplitude of object: to redeem any doth signify goodness, to redeem many doth increase it, to redeem all doth advance it to the highest pitch; the more are obliged, the greater is the glory due to the benefactor.

Hence the 'earth being full of the goodness of the Lord, the Lord being gracious unto all, and his mercy being over all his works,' all creatures partaking of God's bounty, is so often insisted on in those divine hymns, as a ground of praise to God.

Some do indeed speak of glorifying God for his discriminating grace, as if grace the narrower it were the better it were: but is not selfishness and envy at the bottom of this? Is not

this the disposition of those in the gospel, who murmured—'is thine eye evil because mine is good?'

It is dangerous to restrain God's benevolence and beneficence within bounds narrower than they really are; thereby diminishing his glory.

2. Hereby is discovered the general obligation of men to love God; to praise him, to serve him in sense of his goodness, in regard to his beneficence, out of gratitude toward him. If God hath been so kindly affected toward men, and so careful of their welfare, as for procuring and promoting their salvation to provide a Saviour for them, to design his own beloved Son to that performance, in prosecution thereof depressing him into so low a state, exposing him to such inconveniences and indignities, such crosses and afflictions, how much are then all men obliged to love him, as their gracious friend and benefactor; to praise and celebrate him for his favor and mercy, to render all blessings and thanks unto him? This certainly is the duty of all, if the redemption in God's design reach to all; otherwise in reality it lieth on few, in practice it could scarce touch any. They cannot be obliged to thank God for their redemption, who are not obliged to him for the thing itself; they cannot heartily resent the kindness, who are not assured that it extends to them; and to such assurance (according to the doctrine of particular redemption) it is certain that very few men, especially of the best men, can arrive; it is a question whether any men arrive thereto.

According to the sense of all men, it is also no easy thing to know certainly whether a man at present be in the state of grace: and he that doth not know that, cannot (except on the score of general redemption) be assured that he is redeemed; and therefore cannot thank God.

It hath been the common doctrine of Christendom for fifteen hundred years together, that no man (without a special revelation) can in this life be assured of his perseverance, and consequently not of his salvation; and consequently not of his election or redemption, in case only they who are saved are in the design of God redeemed: no man therefore, without that special revelation, can thank God heartily for his redemption,

as being uncertain thereof, it being a secret reserved in God's breast.

It is yet a farther difficulty, supposing a man to have a good assurance of his present state, to be assured of his final perseverance in it: which he that hath not, cannot (except on the said score) thank God for it.

The best men especially, who, out of modesty and humility, are apt to doubt of their present state; who studying their hearts, and discovering many imperfections in themselves; who reflecting on their lives, and observing in them many defects, are apt to question whether they are qualified for God's favor, or fitted for the future account and enjoyment of heaven; who considering the treachery of their hearts, the feebleness of their reason, that unsteadiness of their resolution, will be apt to fear they may fall away, will be rendered hence uncapable to give God thanks for their redemption: only the bold and blind bayards (who usually out of self-conceit are so exceedingly confident of their election and salvation) will be able to praise God for it.

Hence the assurance of salvation happening to few, and of them to much fewer on good grounds; it being necessary to none, it being perhaps (yet far more probably, according to the general sense of Christendom) groundless to any; few or none are capable to render God praise and thanks for it: so shall he lose in effect all thanks for the greatest benefit he did ever confer on mankind.

It is therefore a dangerous opinion, which checketh their gratitude, which stoppeth their mouths from praising God, which so depriveth God of his due praise. It is much more safe to praise God for the benefits we conceive we have, but have not, than to neglect to praise him for that we have.

3. This doctrine doth afford great matter of comfort. If a man reflecting on his own heart and ways (observing in them many blemishes and defects) is apt to be discouraged, yet it will raise him to consider that he is not thereby excluded from a possibility of salvation, seeing he is assured of God's favorable inclination, and who hath expressed so much good-will and favor toward him in his redemption; seeing he is persuaded that he hath a Saviour so kindly and pitifully affected toward him;

who wisheth him well; who is concerned in his salvation, that he might not be crossed or defeated in his designs, that he might not lose the effects of his endeavors, the price of his blood. But he that seeth himself in so doubtful a condition, as to his own qualifications, and withal hath no assurance that God was ever graciously disposed toward him, cannot but thereby be much discouraged.

This doctrine therefore is safe and useful; it can do no man harm; it may do him great good, by giving him hopes of being assisted and accepted by his Redeemer. But the other is dangerous, as tending to discourage and deject men.

4. This doctrine is a great incitement to the performance of duty; both as working on men's ingenuity, and disposing them in gratitude to serve God, from the resentment of their obligation for so great a favor; and as assuring them of acceptance in case of endeavor to obey. How can he but be moved willingly to serve God, who hath an apprehension of God's such merciful design to save him? of his having done so much in order thereto?

But how can he be moved to serve God in consideration of such a benefit, who is ignorant of its being intended him? How can any man apply himself cheerfully to serve that master, whose favorable inclination toward him, whose readiness to accept his service he doubteth of?

The Apostles propound it as a ground of gratitude, and an obligation to the performance of duty, that they are redeemed by Christ; which supposeth they do all know and believe it.

Supposing Christ is not the Redeemer of all, but of those only who shall be finally saved, these grounds of thankfulness and enforcements of duty cannot properly or pertinently respect all Christians, and indeed only those who are sure of their salvation.

My thanking Christ for his redeeming me, my diligently serving him as my Redeemer, supposeth my opinion, and is grounded on the truth of his being really so:—I cannot heartily, confidently, or comfortably do it, except I know it, and am assured thereof; which I cannot do, except Christ died for all men, or that I am assured of my particular election.

So that either Christ is an universal Saviour, or the greatest part of Christians are disobliged and incapacitated reasonably to thank him, to praise him, to serve him, as they are enjoined to do.

5. It is a great aggravation of infidelity, of apostasy, of all disobedience, that we are guilty of them, do frustrate the designs and undertakings of Christ, do reject the overtures of his grace, do abuse the goodness and mercy of their Redeemer; it consequently deterreth from those things.

'The pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God toward them;' (God therefore designed their good.)

'How shall we escape that neglect so great salvation?' A salvation which they were capable of, which was designed for them, which was offered to them; otherwise there would have been no danger in neglecting it, no fault in doing it.

It is said of the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, that 'they did ἀποθεῖσθαι, thrust away the gospel, (the word of salvation, that was sent them,) judging themselves unworthy of eternal life:' God did think fit out of goodness seriously to offer it to them, but they did not think fit to embrace it.

'Despisest thou the rules of God's goodness?' How can any man despise that which doth not concern him, which never was offered him, which at least he hath no ground of confidence, that it extendeth to him?

'These things I speak that ye may be saved:' so our Lord saith to those—'who did not believe in him.'

'How often have I willed,' &c.

'Denying the Lord that bought them.'

6. It is a great encouragement and excitement to devotion. Who can be backward of having recourse to his Redeemer; or of using his mediation? Whom will not such an experiment of goodness invite and encourage?

But the contrary apprehension must needs damp devotion, and discourage from it. He can apply himself to God but faintly and distrustfully, who distrusteth whether he hath any Redeemer or Mediator, or no; who must thus conceive and say to himself: Perhaps God hath loved me, and perhaps he never had nor will have any regard to my welfare. Perhaps Christ died with intention to do me good; perhaps he never

did mean any such thing. Perhaps those expressions of kindness sounding so generally do not include me: perhaps I am excluded, and only deluded by them. When a man cannot say to Christ, O my Saviour!—O my Mediator! &c. nor use his intercession with God for the procurement of faith, of grace, of any good thing.

7. It is a ground and motive of charity; there arising thence a more considerable relation between all men; being all the objects of Christ's love and mercy should endear men to one another; it rendereth every man valuable in our eyes, as dear and precious in God's sight. It should make his salvation desirable to us.

'Pray for all men,' saith St. Paul.

The contrary opinion removeth this ground of charity; and so cooleth it.

8. It should consequently render us careful to promote the salvation of others, and fearful to hinder it by ill example, by ill doctrine, by any misbehavior. So doth St. Paul argue, when he saith, 'Destroyest thou him for whom Christ died?'

9. It is a piece of justice to acknowlege the right and interest of every man in his Saviour.

A wrong to exclude any; to confine and appropriate this great blessing; to engross, to inclose a common; to restrain that by forging distinctions, which is so unlimitedly expressed.

The undertakings and performances of our Saviour did respect all men, as the common works of nature do; as the air we breathe in, as the sun which shineth on us; the which are not given to any man particularly, but to all generally; not as a proper inclosure, but as a common—they are indeed mine, but not otherwise than as they do belong to all men.

A gift they are to all equally, though they do not prove to all a blessing: there being no common gift, which by the refusal, neglect, or ill use of it may not prove a curse—'a savor of death.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXXV.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSE 10.

THE proper business of a festival is spiritual joy and gratitude for some notable blessing.

Such joy is a duty, or a part of devotion, required by God, and very acceptable to him: this enlarged on. Object of the discourse; first, to descant on or paraphrase the text; secondly, to urge the main duty implied in it.

Behold: This is a word denoting *admiration*, exciting *attention*, and intimating *assurance:* this explained.

I bring good tidings: *I*, an angel, a special messenger, and faithful servant of God, bring them, that I may incline you to believe them.

Good tidings of great joy: Tidings that may gratify the curiosity of any man: such as may not only satisfy your reason, but touch your affections, by their comfortable nature and beneficial tendency: these I *bring*

To you: to you *shepherds;* persons of mean condition and simple capacity, leading this innocent, humble, toilsome, and anxious sort of life; who are little concerned in any great transactions, and can have but small hopes of bettering your condition here by any changes; yet not to princes and great men, but to you who may well represent the greater and better part of mankind, the Lord of heaven vouchsafes to send these *tidings of great joy;* which shall be

To all people; or rather to all *the people:* that is, to God's ancient and peculiar people, in regard to whom it is said, *I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* To this

people primarily, and more immediately did this joy appertain: this farther explained. But in effect the expression is to be understood extensively in reference to all people. Here indeed we have παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, *to all the people;* but in the *nunc dimittis* of old Simeon, we have πάντων τῶν λαῶν, *of all the peoples:* other instances quoted.

Christ was to be born by nation a Jew, but a man by nature: *the Son of Man* was a title that he commonly affected, no less than the *Son of Abraham*, or *of David:* he was born indeed *under the law*, but *of a woman*, and therefore brother to us all, as *partaker of the same flesh and blood.* This topic enlarged on.

We are then all concerned in these tidings; whence our duty must be to listen to them, weigh the purport of them, and diligently contemplate the reasons of that great joy which should be their result: for which purpose it may be advisable to take some prospect of this gospel.

The matter of it is the nativity of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: for, *to you*, saith the angel, *is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;* an occurrence fraught with all the greatest causes of joy imaginable. These fully dilated on. So that as they who celebrate the birth of a prince do mean thereby to express their joy for all the good which they anticipate from his protection and conduct throughout his life; and as they who welcome the sun-rise do imply their satisfaction in the comfort of his light throughout the day, so may the nativity of our Lord afford matter of rejoicing on account of all the train of mighty blessings which succeed it: these enlarged on. But waiving numberless benefits, let us touch only on some of those which have a more close and formal relation to this great event.

1. Let us consider that his nativity imports the completion of many ancient prophecies, predictions, and prefigurations concerning it; that whereas all former dispensations were pre-

ludes or preambles to this, now all is come to be fulfilled in the most clear and effectual manner: this head enlarged on, and illustrated from Scripture.

2. Let us consider what alteration our Lord's coming produced, by comparing the state of things before it with that which followed it. State of the old world, then consisting of two parts, severed by a strong *wall of partition*, described. Miserable condition of the Gentiles, or greater part; also that of the Jews, or lesser part, was involved in much darkness, and subject to the bonds of the law, &c. Such was the state of the world in its parts; and of the whole, it may be said that it was *shut up under sin*, and that all men sat *in darkness, in the region and shadow of death;* &c.

Now *we are all children of the light, and of the day:* every child is instructed in saving truths, &c. Now the Spirit of God is poured on all flesh; Jew and Gentile are re-united and compacted in one body; &c.

3. Let us consider that the nativity of our Lord is a grand instance, evidence, and earnest of God's great affection and benignity towards mankind; for *in this*, saith St. John, *the love of God was manifested;* &c.

4. We may consider it as not only expressing simple goodwill, but as implying a perfect reconciliation, a firm peace, a steady friendship, established between God and us: that it did not only proceed from love, but also produced love to us: this topic enlarged on.

5. It infers a great honor and a high preferment to us: not otherwise could mankind have been so dignified, or our nature so advanced: for hence we become allied to God in a most near affinity; so that the words of the psalmist are indeed verified, *Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor*, &c.

6. Finally, if we survey the principal causes of joy and special exultation, we shall find them all concurring in this event.

Is a messenger of good news embraced with joy? Behold the great Evangelist is come, full of the most acceptable news; &c.

Is the birth of a prince to be commemorated with joy by honest subjects? Behold a Prince born to all the world! a Prince undertaking to rule mankind with all equity, and bringing peace and prosperity to all.

May victory beget exultation? See, the invincible Warrior issues into the field, *conquering and to conquer.*

Is a proclamation of peace, after rueful wars, to be solemnised with alacrity? Behold then everlasting peace between heaven and earth.

Is recovery of liberty delectable to poor slaves? Behold the *Redeemer is come out of Sion;* &c. Similar interrogatories continued to the end.

SERMON LXXV.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSE 10.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

THE proper business of a festival is spiritual joy, conceived in our hearts by reflexion on some notable blessing conferred on us; accompanied with a grateful sense and expression, answerable to the special bounty and mercy of God, in due proportion to the nature and degree of that blessing.

Such joy is a duty, or a part of religious devotion, required by God, and very acceptable to him: for as God would have his servants perpetually content, well satisfied, and cheerful in all states, and on all occurrences; so he doth especially demand from us, that we should entertain his favors with delight and complacence; it being proper, it being seemly, it being just, so to do: for since joy is a natural result of our obtaining whatever we do apprehend good, or esteem and affect; the conception of it is a plain argument that we do well understand, do rightly prize, do cordially like, do thankfully embrace God's favors; as, on the contrary, a defect of it doth imply that we do not mind them, or take them to be little worth, that we do not sensibly relish them, or accept them kindly. And if ever we are obliged, if ever we are concerned so to rejoice, then surely it is now; when the fairest occasion and highest cause of joy that ever was is presented to us; when certain news

from heaven, and the best that ever came from thence, of the most admirable, the most glorious, the most beneficial event that ever happened in the world, is in a manner suitably rare conveyed to us; for, 'Behold,' saith the angel, 'I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.'

On which words (each whereof is emphatical, and pregnant with matter observable) we shall first make a brief descant, or paraphrase, supplying the room of a curious analysis; then we shall urge the main duty couched in them.

Ἰδού, 'Behold:' This is a word denoting admiration, exciting attention, intimating assurance: 'Behold,' and admire; it is no mean, no ordinary matter, that I report, but a most remarkable, a very marvellous event: 'Behold,' and attend; it is a business not to be passed over with small regard, but most worthy your consideration, of high moment and concerment to you. 'Behold' and see; it is no uncertain, no obscure thing; but that whereof you may be fully assured, as if it were most evident to your sense, and which by conspicuous proofs shall be demonstrated; in the mean while you have no slight authority for it: for

Εὐαγγελίζομαι, 'I bring good tidings;' I, an angel, a special messenger of God purposely sent on this errand, that by the strangeness of my apparition I may excite you to regard it, by the weight of my testimony I may incline you to believe it, by the dignity of my nature I may declare the importance of it; I, a faithful servant of God, and a kind friend to men, very willing at his command to perform good offices to them, do bring a message well becoming an angel's mouth, worth my descent from heaven, and putting on this visible shape: for I bring

Εὐαγγελίζομαι χαρὰν μεγάλην, 'good tidings of great joy:' I bring tidings that may gratify the curiosity of any man, the mind of man naturally being greedy of news: 'good tidings;' those are welcome to all men, and apt to yield more pleasure than any knowlege we had before: tidings of joy; such as may not only minister a dry satisfaction to your reason, but sensibly touch your affections, by the comfortable nature and beneficial tendency of them: tidings of great joy; as not touching any indifferent or petty business, but affairs of nearest

concernment and highest consequence to you: (such, indeed, as you shall understand, which do concern not the poor interests of this world, not the sorry pleasures of sense, not any slender advantage of your present life and temporal state; but your spiritual welfare, your everlasting condition, the future joy and happiness of your souls;) tidings, indeed, the most gladsome that ever sounded on earth, that ever entered into mortal ear: these I bring

Ὑμῖν, 'to you:' to you shepherds; persons of mean condition and simple capacity, leading this innocent and humble sort of life, employed in your honest vocation, undergoing toilsome labor and sore hardship; witness the open field, witness the cold season, witness the dark night, in which I find you watching and guarding your sheep; to you, who could expect no very welcome tidings; who are little concerned in any great transactions, and can have small ambition or hope of bettering your condition by any changes here; even to you (not in the first place to the mighty princes, to the crafty statesmen, to the sage philosophers, or learned rabbies, to the wealthy merchants, or fine citizens, who now are warm in their houses, enjoying their ease and pleasure; reposing on their beds, or sitting by their fires, or revelling at their banquets and sports; but to you) poor, harmless, silly, industrious souls, who well may represent the greater and better part of mankind; in this surprising and absolutely free way the gracious Lord of heaven by me his special minister doth vouchsafe to send from thence 'tidings of great joy:' which shall be

Παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, 'to all people:' or rather to all 'the people;' that is, to God's ancient and peculiar people, in regard to which it is said, 'I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;' to *that* people, I say, especially, primarily, and more immediately this joy did appertain; it, by a closer relation to God, and special interest in his promises, having plainest title thereto; it, from anticipations of knowlege, faith, and hope, being more capable to admit such an overture; it indeed being the representative of all the spiritual Israel, or faithful seed of Abraham, for whom the benefits which these tidings import were designed; to it first indeed, but mediately and consequentially to all people dispersed on the face of the

earth. The expression seemeth adapted to the present conceits of that nation, which apprehended nothing about God's favorable intentions to the community of men: but in effect it is to be understood extensively in reference to all people: for the Saviour, the Christ, the Lord, of whom this good news did report, was not only to be the Redeemer and Governor of that small people, but of the world, of every nation, of all mankind: here indeed we have παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, 'to all the people;' but in the *nunc dimittis* of old Simeon, we have πάντων τῶν λαῶν, 'of all the peoples:' 'Mine eyes,' said he, 'have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the peoples;' As he was 'the glory of his people Israel;' as in him 'God did visit and redeem that his people;' so he was 'made a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be for salvation to the uttermost ends of the earth:' he was 'the expectation of Israel;' but he was likewise 'the desire of all nations:' he was destined 'to rule in Sion;' but 'the Heathen also were given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession:' he was 'the root of Jesse, which should stand for an ensign of the people, to which the Gentiles should seek;' he was that royal person, of whom the psalmist did sing, 'Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.'

He was to be born by nation a Jew, but a man by nature; 'the Son of man' was a style which he commonly did own and affect, no less than the Son of Abraham, or of David; he was born indeed under the law, but of a woman; and therefore brother to us all, as 'partaker of the same flesh and blood:' hence was he endued with an human compassion, and with a fraternal affection toward all men; hence was he disposed to extend the benefit of his charitable and gracious performances unto them all.

Judea therefore must not ingross this angelical gospel; it is of importance most universal and unlimited, reaching through all successions of time, and all extensions of place; filling all ages and all regions of the world with matter and with obligation of joy; hence even by Moses anciently (according to St. Paul's interpretation) were all nations on this account invited to a common joy; 'Rejoice,' said he, 'O ye nations with his

people.' Hence, in foresight of this event, the holy psalmist (as the fathers expound him) did sing, 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof:' hence, 'Sing, O thou barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, that thou didst not travail with child'—'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose'—'Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth,' said the evangelical prophet in regard to this dispensation; in fine, this angel himself did interpret his own words, when in concert with the heavenly choir he sang that anthem, 'Glory be to God in the highest; on earth peace, and good-will toward men:' whence we may collect that a peace diffused over the earth, and a good-will extended toward all men, were implied in these 'tidings of great joy to all people.'

We then are all concerned in these tidings, and we may look on them as by this heavenly Evangelist imparted to us; whence our duty must be to listen with reverent attention unto them, seriously to weigh the purport of them, diligently to contemplate the reasons of that great joy, which effectually should be produced in us by them, as their proper and due result; to further which practice, let us take some prospect of this gospel, whereby it may appear pleasant, and apt to kindle a sprightly joy in our hearts. The matter of it is the nativity of our ever blessed Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus; for, 'To you,' saith our angel, 'is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;' an occurrence fraught with all the greatest causes of joy imaginable; as importing innumerable, unexpressibly and unconceivably vast advantages thence springing to us.

It doth minister occasion of rejoicing for all the blessings, which did flow from each of his salutary undertakings and performances; for all the mercies purchased by the merits of his obedience, and by the price of his blood; for all the graces issuing from his dispensation of the Holy Spirit; for all the benefits consequent on his illustrious resurrection, ascension, and glorification; as being a good entrance to them, yea, a great progress in them, and a certain pledge of their full accomplishment: for all the work of our redemption was in a manner achieved, when our Saviour did appear; his incarna-

tion was the great step toward it, as being an act of the humblest obedience, and of the highest merit, that could anywise be performed, for satisfying the justice of God, and winning his favor toward us. His taking up life may seem more meritorious than his laying it down, and the chief passion which he could ever undergo; his death was a passion, great as death could be; his life also was a continual passion, or exercise of huge patience: but his birth seemeth to be the greatest and strangest passion of all; involving the lowest submission and the deepest suffering. What nobler sacrifice could there be, than God's offering himself up to mortality, to infirmity, to slavery? What obedience can be thought of comparable to that which he did express, when he said, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!' 'I came down, not that I might do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.' For him to descend from heaven, the region of light and bliss, into this gloomy and sad world; for him in a manner to divest himself of celestial majesty, and to assume the form of a servant; for him to be inclosed in a womb, and to come out wailing thence, to suck at a breast for life, to be carried in arms, and laid in a manger, to enter on a stage of being so very low and homely; for him, I say, 'the Lord of glory,' thus to empty and abase himself; may not this reasonably be deemed more than, after his becoming man, to sustain all the grievances incident to our nature and state? Whence the very assumption of flesh was, saith St. Athanasius, the redemption of all mankind. He was at least thence engaged in the way of acting and suffering whatever was needful for our recovery; and having gone so far, assuredly he never would flinch or recoil, but would go through with all; being come, he would show himself come to purpose, leaving no part unfinished of his grand design.

So that as they, who celebrate the birth of a prince, do mean thereby to express their joy for all the good which they do hopefully presume to enjoy from his protection and conduct afterward in all his life; and as they who welcome the sunrising, do imply their satisfaction in the conveniences of his light through the whole ensuing day; so may the nativity of our Lord afford matter of rejoicing for all the train of mighty blessings which do succeed it. We may therefore now well

consider him born to instruct us by his excellent doctrine, and to guide us by his perfect example; born to merit God's mercy and favor toward us, by an intire submission to God's pleasure in the whole conduct of his life, and in the final resignation of it; born to renew and sanctify our nature, to support and strengthen us in obedience to God's commandments, to succor us in temptations, to comfort us in distresses by his grace; born to rear himself from the grave for confirming our faith, and ensuring our hopes of salvation; born to ascend up above all the heavens to God's right hand, there effectually to intercede for us, thence liberally to dispense all heavenly blessings to us. Well may we now rejoice, as seeing him come to disclose the way of happiness, to establish the covenant of grace, to void all the obstructions, and subdue all the enemies to our welfare: well may we celebrate this birth, as by its virtue blessing the patriarchs, enlightening the prophets, inspiring the martyrs with faith and courage, enduing all the saints that ever have been, with grace, and crowning them with glory; so that in this day we have the passion, the *pasch*, the ascension, the pentecost, the memorials of every saint suggested to us; the joys of all our festivals do conspire or commence in this; which is the head and spring, which is the fruitful seed, which is the hopeful morning of them all. Πάντα ταῦτα τῆς παρούσης ἡμέρας χάρις ἐστιν· αὕτη γὰρ ἦρξε τῶν ἐφεξῆς ἀγαθῶν. 'All these things,' saith St. Gregory Nyssen, 'are the grace of this present day, for it began the goods which did in order succeed.'

But waiving the numberless benefits so consequent on the nativity, we shall only touch some of those which have a more formal and close relation thereto.

I pass over the contemplation of that sweet harmony between the old and the new world; in which, to our comfortable satisfaction, the sweetest attributes of God (his goodness, his wisdom, his fidelity and constancy) do illustrate themselves, by completion of the ancient promises, prefigurations, and predictions touching this event.

I forbear also to reflect on the happy alteration and amendment of the world, which our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the state of things before it, with that which followed

it; the consideration of which case is very pleasant, and productive of joy. First, then,

1. Let us consider that the nativity doth import the completion of many ancient promises, predictions, and prefigurations concerning it; that whereas all former dispensations of favor and mercy were as preludes or preambles to this; the old law did aim to represent it in its mysterious pomps; the chief of providential occurrences did intimate it; the prophets often in their mystical raptures did allude to it, and often in clear terms did express it; the gracious designs of God, and the longing expectations of mankind being so variously implied in regard thereto; now all is come to be fulfilled, and perfected in most clear, most effectual, most substantial accomplishment; now is sprung up that 'seed of the woman,' which, according to the first gospel preached to Adam, should 'bruise the serpent's head;' now is the mystical Isaac, the miraculous 'Son of promise' born; now is that grant to Abraham, 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,' made good; now is 'Shiloh come,' of whom Jacob foreboded, 'unto him the gatherings of the people shall be;' now is that oracle of Moses more than verified, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like to me; him shall ye hear;' now 'the Star is come out of Jacob,' the vision whereof dazzled Balaam, and stopped him from cursing that people, in which it should arise; now is that oath discharged to David, 'Of the fruit of thy body will I set on thy throne;' now those illustrious predictions of Isaiah, 'There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse'—'A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son;' 'to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be on his shoulders'—'There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn ungodliness from Jacob,' are fully accomplished; now 'the righteous branch,' of which Jeremiah and Zechariah spake, is sprouted forth; and Ezekiel's 'One Shepherd,' Daniel's 'Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven;' Micah's 'Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old;' Haggai's 'Desire of all nations;' Malachi's 'Angel of the covenant,' and 'Sun of righteousness,' have all in truth appeared: now is that glorious King and Captain arrived,

whom the holy oracles do so magnificently describe; whom Moses and Joshua, whom David and Solomon in so many pat circumstances did foreshadow; whom God would 'set on his holy hill of Sion:' 'the sceptre of whose kingdom is a mighty sceptre;' who should 'raise the tabernacle of David that is fallen;' 'before whom all kings should fall down, and whom all nations should serve;' who 'should reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end.'

Now what can be more delightful, or satisfactory to our mind, than to reflect on this sweet harmony of things, this goodly correspondence between the old and new world; wherein so pregnant evidences of God's chief attributes, (of his goodness, of his wisdom, of his fidelity and constancy,) all conspiring to our benefit, do shine? Is it not pleasant to contemplate how provident God hath ever been for our welfare? what trains from the world's beginning, or ever since our unhappy fall, he hath been laying to repair and restore us? how wisely he hath ordered all dispensations with a convenient reference and tendency to this masterpiece of grace? how steady he hath been in prosecuting his designs, and how faithful in accomplishing his promises concerning it?

If the 'holy patriarchs did see this day, and were glad;' if a glimpse thereof did cause their hearts to leap within them; if its very dawn had on the spirits of the prophets so vigorous an influence, what comfort and complacence should we feel in this its real presence, and bright aspect on us! How sensibly should we be affected with this our happy advantage above them; the which our Lord himself then did teach us to estimate duly, when he said, 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear: for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.'

2. Let us consider what alteration our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the state of things before it with that which followed it. The old world then consisting of two parts, severed by a strong wall of partition, made up of difference in opinion, in practice, in affection, together with a strict prohibition to one of holding intercourse with the other.

Of one, and that far the greater part, St. Paul hath given us these descriptions and characters: 'They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant, having no hope, and being without God in the world;' they were 'by nature the children of wrath and of disobedience;' they were 'dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience:' they did 'walk in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart; and being past feeling, did give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;' they 'had their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;' being 'foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' Such was the case, the dismally wretched case, of the Gentile world; such were our forefathers, (such after them of course, by fatal consequence, should we have been;) they were in their minds blinded with gross ignorance, and deluded with foul errors; they were in their wills and affections corrupted with great disorder, perverseness, sensuality, malice; they did in their conversation practice all sorts of impiety, iniquity, and impurity; their conceptions of God were very unworthy, and their worship answerably such; (full of sottish, savage, beastly superstitions;) their principles were vain, and their life conformably dissolute; in short, they lived under the domination and influence of wicked spirits, who thence are styled lords and princes of this world, of this air, of this secular darkness; even of the wisest among them, (the number of whom, notwithstanding the clatter their writings made, was very small and inconsiderable,) of those who by the conduct of natural light strove to disengage themselves from vulgar mistakes and miscarriages, the case was little better; for even their minds (after all their studious disquisitions and debates) proved dark and giddy; full of ignorance, of error, of doubt in regard to the main points of religion and of morality; some of them flatly denying the existence, or (which in effect is the same) the providence of God; the natural dis-

tinction between good and evil, the spiritual nature and future subsistence of our souls, the dispensation of rewards and punishments after this life; others wavering in doubt, or having but faint persuasions about these matters; few or none having clear notions, or steady opinions about any such things; whence their practice, in correspondence to their rules, must needs have been very loose, or very lame: so that well might our Apostle say of them, 'They became vain in their reasonings, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves wise, they became fools; and as they did not like to retain God in their knowlege, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.'

As for the other part, or little parcel of men, the condition of that was also very low: if the rest of the world did lie in dark night, they did live but in a dusky twilight; their religion was much wrapt up in shadow and mystery; they had but dilute ideas of God's nature, and scant discoveries of his will; their law or rule of practice in divers respects was defective and infirm; they were locked under the discipline of childish rudiments, suiting their raw capacities, and under the bondage of slavish yokes, befitting their stubborn dispositions; which defailances in notion their practice commonly did outstrip; being fond, corrupt, hypocritical, void of interior, substantial, and genuine righteousness; as the old prophets did often complain, and as our Lord, with his Apostles, did urge.

Such was the state of the world in its parts; and jointly of the whole it may be said that it was 'shut up under sin' and guilt, under darkness and weakness, under death and corruption, under sorrow and woe: that no full declaration of God's pleasure, no clear overture of mercy, no express grant of spiritual aid, no certain redemption from the filth or the force of sin, from the stroke of death, from due punishment hereafter; no encouragements suitable to high devotion, or strict virtue, were anywise in a solemn way exhibited or dispensed before our Lord's appearance: so that well might all men be then represented as Cimmerians, 'sitting in darkness, in the region and shadow of death;' well may we suppose all ages foregoing to have teemed with hope and desire of this happy day; or that, as St. Paul saith, 'the whole creation (that is, all mankind)

groaneth together, and travaileth together until now;' as laboring with pangs of implicit desire, or under a painful sense of needing a Saviour; well might Isaiah thus proclaim his coming; 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen on thee: for, behold, darkness shall cover the land, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise on thee, and his glory shall be seen on thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising:' for now, 'the Lord hath made known his salvation, his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth do see the salvation of our God.'

Now 'we are all children of the light, and of the day;' all 'do know God from the least to the greatest;' the rarest, the deepest notions are grown common and obvious; every child is instructed in the highest truths, every peasant is become a great philosopher, (beyond Aristotle, or Plato, or Epictetus,) skilful of the best knowlege, able to direct his life in the best way, capable of obtaining the best good.

Now the Spirit of God (the Spirit of direction, of succor, of comfort spiritual) is poured on all flesh. 'Now the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;' fully instructing them in their duty, and strongly enabling them to perform it, freely offering them mercy, mightily encouraging them with hopes of most blessed rewards.

Now Jew and Gentile are reunited and compacted in one body; walking in the same light, and under obligation to the same laws; sharing in a common redemption and inheritance; being inseparably linked together with the bands of faith, of charity, of spiritual fraternity; thus 'old things are passed away, behold all things are become new,' in virtue and consequence of our Lord's appearance; in contemplation of which so great, so general, so happy a change, how can we forbear to rejoice?

But farther, that we may yet more nearly touch the point,

3. Let us consider that the nativity of our Lord is a grand instance, a pregnant evidence, a rich earnest of Almighty God's very great affection and benignity toward mankind; for, 'In

this,' saith St. John, 'the love of God was manifested, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world:' and, 'Through the tender mercies of our God,' sang old Zechariah, 'the day-spring from on high did visit us:' this indeed is the peculiar experiment, wherein that most divine attribute did show and signalise itself. The power of God doth brightly shine in the creation, the wisdom of God may clearly be discerned in the government of things; but the incarnation of God is that work, is that dispensation of grace, wherein the divine goodness doth most conspicuously display itself. How indeed possibly could God have demonstrated a greater excess of kindness toward us, than by thus, for our sake and good, sending his dearest Son out of his bosom into this sordid and servile state, subjecting him to all the infirmities of our frail nature, exposing him to the worst inconveniences of our low condition? What expressions can signify, what comparisons can set out the stupendous vastness of this kindness? If we should imagine that a great prince should put his only son (a son most lovely, and worthily most beloved) into rags, should dismiss him from his court, should yield him up into the hardest slavery, merely to the intent that he thereby might redeem from captivity the meanest and basest of his subjects, how faint a resemblance would be of that immense goodness, of that incomparable mercy, which in this instance the King of all the world hath declared toward us his poor vassals, his indeed unworthy rebels!

And what greater reason of joy can there be, than such an assurance of his love, on whose love all our good dependeth, in whose love all our felicity consisteth? What can be more delightful than to view the face of our Almighty Lord so graciously smiling on us?

Should we not be extremely glad, should we not be proud, if our earthly prince by any signal mark would express himself kindly affected to us? How much more should we resent such a testimony of God's favor! how worthily may our souls be transported with a sense of such affection!

4. We may consider our Lord's nativity, as not only expressing simple good-will, but implying a p. rfect reconciliation, a firm peace, a steady friendship established between God and

us; or that it did not only proceed from love, but did also produce love to us. We did stand at a great distance, in estrangement, yea in enmity toward God; our first parents had by presumptuous disobedience revolted from him; and we, insisting on the footsteps of their apostasy, continued in defiance of him; 'All men had sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God'—'There was not a righteous man on earth, that did good, and sinned not:' whence unavoidably the wrath of the most holy God was incensed, the justice of the most righteous Lord was engaged against us; thence did issue a sad doom, thence a just sentence of capital punishment was denounced on us; no pretence of favor, no overture of peace, no hope of redress did then appear; we nowise being able to expunge our guilt, to repair our offences, to recover out of that corruption in mind and will, which did seal us up to ruin, indisposing us either to find or to entertain mercy: but our Lord's coming did appease that anger, did mollify that justice, did suspend that condemnation, did close the breach, and 'slay the enmity;' 'God,' as the Apostle speaketh, 'sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin did condemn sin in the flesh:' for how can God now avert his face from us, whom his only dear Son hath vouchsafed to make and own for his brethren? How can he look with an eye of displeasure on that nature, wherewith that Son of his love standeth clothed before him? How can he abide offended with our race, in which pure innocence and perfect obedience are found; he now appearing with us, and for us, in whom not the strictest justice nor the shrewdest malice can descry any fault or blemish; 'in whom therefore God is thoroughly well pleased?' Since we have Emanuel, God with us—God manifested in our flesh—The Lord our righteousness, partaker of our infirmity, intercessor and advocate for his own flesh and blood, ready to do and suffer whatever God pleaseth to require on our behalf, how can God be against us? Shall God and man persist at distance or disaffection, who are so closely related, who are indeed so intimately united in one person? Shall heaven and earth retain enmity, which have so kindly embraced and kissed each other; since 'truth hath sprouted from the earth, and righteousness hath looked down from heaven?' Shall the war go on, when the

great Mediator and Umpire of peace is come; 'preaching peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are near?' Can death any longer reign over us, or our disgrace and misery continue, now that the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, the Captain of salvation doth appear for our relief?

Now then what can be more worthy of joy than such a blessed turn of affairs? How can we otherwise than with exceeding gladness solemnise such a peace? a peace accorded with him, who in forces so infinitely doth overmatch us; who at his pleasure can utterly quell us; who with the greatest ease, with less than a word of his mouth, can dash us to nothing, or hurl us down into an abyss of remediless woe: how can we avoid being extremely satisfied at the recovery of his favor and friendship, which alone can be the foundation of our safety and welfare, which is the sole fountain of all good, of all comfort, of all felicity?

5. Our Lord's nativity doth infer a great honor, and a high preferment to us: nowise indeed could mankind be so dignified, or our nature so advanced as hereby: no wisdom can devise a way beyond this, whereby God should honor his most special favorites, or promote them to a nearness unto himself. For hence we become allied to God in a most strait affinity, his eternal Son being made our brother: hence as touching the blood-royal of heaven we do in dignity o'ertop all the creation; so that what the Psalmist uttered concerning man is verified in the most comprehensive sense: 'Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet:' for now the Son of man, being also the Son of God, is 'the head of all principality and power,' is 'the Lord of all things,' is the sovereign prince of all the world, is placed 'far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.' This is a peculiar honor, to which the highest angels cannot pretend; for 'he took not the nature of angels, but he took the seed of Abraham;' whence those noble creatures are become in a manner inferior to poor us; and, according to just obligation, willingly do adore our nature; for, 'when God brought his first begotten Son into the world, he said, Let all

the angels of God worship him.' Is not indeed our flesh become adorable, as the true Shechinah, as the everlasting palace of the supreme Majesty, 'wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily;' as the most holy shrine of the Divinity; as the orb of inaccessible light; as more than all this, if more could be expressed, or if we could expound that text, 'the word was made flesh, and dwelt in us?' May not our soul worthily claim highest respect, all whose faculties (being endued with unmeasurable participations of the Holy Spirit) have been tuned to a perfect harmony with the all-wise understanding and the most pure will of God? yea, which hath been admitted into the nearest consortship, into the strictest union with the eternal Word; hath become an ingredient of him, who is 'the wisdom and the power of God?' It was a great dignity that man should be made according to the image of God; but it is a more sublime glory that God should be made after the image of man, κατὰ πάντα ὁμοιωθεὶς, 'being made like to us in all things,' bating only sin, which is no part of us, but an unnatural excrescence, or a deflection from our nature: how could we be so raised up to God, as by his thus stooping down to us? What can be imagined more honorable to us, than that God should deem us worthy of such condescension? This, this indeed is our exultation, that God for us should express not only so vast charity, but so prodigious humility.

And is it not good matter of joy to be thus highly graced? When are men better pleased than when they are preferred; than especially, when 'from the meanest state, from the dunghill, or from the dust, they are raised to be set among princes, and made to inherit the throne of glory?' Wherefore this being our case, that we sons of earth, children of corruption, and brethren of worms, (in Job's style;) we exiles of paradise, we heirs of death and misery; we, that by our nature are the lowest of all intelligent creatures, that by our merits were debased 'beneath the beasts that perish,' that we are assumed to such relations, that we are ennobled to such a pitch, that our nature hath mounted so high above all creatures, with what enlargement of heart should we entertain a dispensation so wonderful! how welcome should that day be which doth introduce it!

6. Finally, if we survey all principal causes of joy and special exultation, we shall find them all concurring in this event.

Is a messenger of good news embraced with joy? Behold the great evangelist is come, with his mouth full of news, most admirable, most acceptable: he, who doth acquaint us that God is well pleased, that man is restored, that 'the adversary is cast down,' that paradise is set open, and immortality retrieved; that truth and righteousness, peace and joy, salvation and happiness are descended, and come to dwell on earth; he of whom the prophet told, 'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings;' 'that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;' he who doth himself thus declare the drift and purport of his message; 'The spirit of the Lord God is on me, to preach good tidings unto the meek;' 'he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn.'

Is the birth of a prince by honest subjects to be commemorated with joyous festivity? Behold a prince born to all the world! a prince undertaking to rule mankind with sweetest clemency and exact justice; a prince bringing with him all peace and prosperity; 'in whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely;' who shall protect us in assured rest and safety; shall secure us from all danger and mischief; shall achieve most gallant and glorious exploits in our behalf; shall vanquish all the enemies of our welfare; shall rescue us from the worst slaveries and mischiefs; shall settle us in a most free and happy state: he 'who bringeth salvation from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us;' that, 'being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.' Now therefore it is seasonable to cry out, 'Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him.'

May victory worthily beget exultation? See the invincible warrior doth issue forth into the field, 'conquering and to

conquer:' he that shall baffle and rifle the strong one, our formidable adversary; that shall rout all the forces of hell, and triumph over the powers of darkness; that utterly shall defeat sin, and slay death itself; that shall subdue the world, and lay all things prostrate at his feet; behold the Captain of of our salvation, arrayed with glorious humility, and armed with a mighty patience; see, the great blow is struck, at which the infernal powers do stagger; the devil's pride and envy are abased, all the enemies are amazed, are daunted, are confounded at his presence; they cannot stand, they break, they scatter, they flee before him.

Is a proclamation of peace, after rueful wars, to be solemnised with alacrity? Behold then everlasting peace between heaven and earth, a general peace among men, a sound peace between each good man and himself are settled and published; the illustrious herald, the noble hostage of them is arrived; 'the Prince of peace' himself doth bring all peace unto us.

Is satisfaction of desire and hope very pleasant? Behold the 'desire of all nations, the expectation of Israel,' he for whom the whole creation groaned, is come.

Is recovery of liberty delectable to poor slaves and captives? Behold the 'Redeemer is come out of Sion;' the precious ransom, sufficient to purchase the freedom of many worlds, is laid down; unblemished innocence, purity, and perfection appearing in human nature, have procured a releasement for us; have unlocked the prison of sin detaining us, have knocked off the shackles of guilt sorely pinching and galling our consciences; have wrested us from the hands of those proud masters who claimed a right, who exercised a most tyrannous power over us; he is come, that 'proclaimeth liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound;' the time is come, of which the prophet foretold, 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy on their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'

Is an overture of health acceptable to sick and languishing persons? Behold the great Physician, endued with admirable skill, and furnished with infallible remedies, is come, to cure us of our maladies, and ease us of our pains; to bind up our

wounds, and to pour in balm (the most sovereign balm of his own blood) into them; to free us not only from all mortiferous diseases, but from mortality itself: he, who was 'sent to bind up and heal the brokenhearted;' he who 'himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;' he, of whom the prophet (in relation to corporal, and much more to spiritual infirmities) did foretel;—'God will come and save you; then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped;' 'then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing;' he, whose art no disease can resist, who is able to cure our most desperate, our most inveterate distempers; to heal the corruption and impotency of our nature, to void the ignorances and errors of our understanding, to correct the stupidity of our hearts, the perverseness of our wills, the disorder of our affections, to mitigate our anguish of conscience, and cleanse our sores of guilt; by various efficacious medicines, by the wholesome instructions of his doctrine; by the powerful inspirations of his grace, by the refreshing comforts of his spirit, by the salutary virtue of his merits and sufferings.

Is mirth seasonable on the day of marriage? Behold the greatest wedding that ever was is this day solemnised; heaven and earth are contracted; divinity is espoused to humanity; a sacred, an indissoluble knot is tied between God and man; 'The Bridegroom is come forth out of his chamber, (*verbum Dei de utero virginali,*) clad in his nuptial garment of flesh, and ready to wed the church, his beloved spouse;* 'Let us therefore be glad and rejoice; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.'

Is the access of a good friend to be received with cheerful gratulation? Behold the dearest and best Friend of all mankind (most able, most willing, most ready to perform all good offices, to impart wholesome advice, needful aid, sweet converse, and seasonable consolation) is arrived to visit us, to sojourn with us, to dwell in us for ever.

Is opportune relief grateful to persons in a forlorn condition, pinched with extreme want, or plunged in any hard distress? Behold a merciful, a bountiful, a mighty Saviour and succorer,

* Aug. de temp. Serm. 2.

undertaking 'to comfort all that mourn,' inviting all such to receive from him a plentiful supply for their needs, a comfortable ease in their pressures, a happy riddance from their calamities; who 'crieth aloud, If any one thirsteth, let him come to me and drink;' 'Come to me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

Is the sun-rising comfortable, after a tedious, darksome, and cold night? See, 'the Sun of righteousness is risen with healing in his wings,' dispensing all about his pleasant rays and kindly influences: 'The dayspring from on high hath visited us;' diffusing an universal light on the souls of men, whereby the night of ignorance is dispelled, the spectres of error are vanished, the mists of doubt are scattered; whereby we clearly and assuredly discern all truths of importance to us, and worthy of our knowlege; concerning the nature and attributes, the works and providence, the will and pleasure of God; concerning ourselves, our nature and original, our duty and interest, our future state, and final doom: 'Our light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen on us;' 'the light of the world, the true light, enlightening every man,' by whose lustre 'all flesh may see the salvation of God, and which guideth our feet in the way of peace,' doth visibly shine forth on us.

Never indeed did heaven with so fair and serene a countenance smile on earth, as then it did, when this (*ἀστὴρ λαμπρὸς καὶ ὀρθρινὸς*,) 'bright and morning star' did spring up above our horizon, bringing this goodly day; and with it shedding life and cheer among us.

From this auspicious day did commence the revocation of that fatal curse, by which we were expelled from paradise, adjudged to death, and committed to hell; from thence we became reinstated in a condition of hope, and in a fair capacity of happiness; from thence is to be dated a return of joy into this region of disconsolateness. In this nativity mankind was born, or did revive from manifold deaths; from a legal, a moral, a natural, an eternal death; from lying dead in irreparable guilt, and under an insuperable power of sin; from having our bodies irrecoverably dissolved by corruption, and our souls immersed into that second more ghastly death of perpetual incurable anguish.

It is in effect therefore the birthday of the world; the beginning of a new, better, eternal life to men, (offered to all, and effectually bestowed on those who will embrace it,) which we now do celebrate. All reason therefore we have to rejoice most heartily and most abundantly: as the goods thence accruing to us are in multitude innumerable, in quality inestimable, in duration immense; so in some correspondence should our joy be very intense, very effuse, very stable; the contemplation of them should infuse somewhat of that unspeakable joy, whereof St. Peter speaketh; we should 'be filled,' according to St. Paul's expression, 'with all joy and peace in believing' them; we should 'hold fast,' as the Apostle to the Hebrews adviseth, 'the confidence and rejoicing of hope,' grounded on them, 'firm to the end.'

Having so many, so great causes of joy, are we not very stupid, are we not strangely cross and perverse, if we neglect so pleasant a duty?

To conclude: of all the days that rise on us, this undoubtedly is the queen, crowned by God's own hand with sovereign blessings; God hath avowed it to be the day of his peculiar making, and therefore of our special rejoicing; for thus of old the inspired psalmist did teach and exhort us to keep Christmas: 'This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXXVI.

ACTS, CHAP. III.—VERSE 18.

THERE are many good arguments, of different kinds, which conspire to persuade the truth of our religion; but on no other ground do the Scriptures so much build its truth and our obligation to embrace it, as on the exact conformity thereof to all the ancient Scriptures, which foreshowed and foretold it.

To this our Lord, in his discourses with incredulous persons, referred them. (Joh. v. 39.) By this he instructed and convinced his disciples. (Luke xxiv. 27. &c.) This the Apostles in all their preaching chiefly insisted on: instances quoted.

It is no wonder that the founders of our religion laid such a stress on this probation; as it has some peculiar uses and advantages. Future contingencies being secrets, which no creature can dive into, the prediction of them cannot proceed otherwise than from God's pleasure; neither would he yield it, but for a cause that was true and good: this point enlarged on. It had also a peculiar aptitude to convert the Jews, who were possessed with a full persuasion of the veracity and sanctity of their ancient prophets, and could not doubt concerning the truth of that which appeared conformable to what they had foretold should be dispensed for their benefit. This probation has also another advantage; that, taken singly, it suffices to convince: this topic enlarged on.

This way of discourse therefore our Lord and his Apostles did especially use, as generally in respect of all things concerning him, so particularly of his passion: instances quoted: and this is the point referred to in the text by St. Peter, who af-

firms that it had been predicted by an universal consent of all the prophets. Object of the discourse, to illustrate and confirm this assertion.

That the Messias was to come in an humble and lowly manner; to live therein; to cause offences and find oppositions; to be despised and rejected; and at last to be condemned and executed as a malefactor, is a truth indeed which the Jews, (though they firmly believed in and expected the coming of a Messias) did not, and were hardly able to entertain; it being one repugnant to the whole frame of their conceptions: this point fully shown. Even the disciples themselves were deeply imbued with these national prejudices: this enlarged on.

Hence of all things notifying the Messias, this seems to be the only one which in general the Jews did not, or would not, see and acknowlege; and this caused them to overlook all other glorious marks which shone about his person: this, as St. Paul says, was the main *scandal*, which obstructed their embracing the gospel: this led them to persecute our Lord, and to retain an obstinate hatred of his name and memory.

We cannot therefore here, as in other particulars, allege the general consent of God's people in expounding the prophets according to our sense; yet notwithstanding their affected and culpable blindness, there is no particular concerning the Messias in the ancient Scriptures, either more frequently glanced at in the way of mystical insinuation and adumbration; or which is expressed in more clear and direct language; or which by reasonable deduction may be more strongly inferred.

I. On the first point, of mystical adumbration, some things are to be premised. 1. That the all wise God, (who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,) having *before eternal times*, as St. Paul speaks, determined in due time to send the Messias, to accomplish his great and wonderful design, did by his incomprehensible providence so order things, that all the special dispensations preceding it should have a fit

tendency and reference thereto; so that when it came on the stage, it might appear that the main plot consisted therein: this topic enlarged on and illustrated. 2. It is to be observed that because certain eminent servants of God were representatives of Christ, many things are ascribed to them, which only or chiefly were intended of him, their names being used as veils to cover divers things concerning him, which divine wisdom did not think fit to declare more openly: this explained. Neither is this said only according to suppositions assumed in the New Testament; but it agrees with the sense of the ancient Jews, who conceived such mysterious references often to lie under the letter of their Scriptures, in which they every where supposed a *Midrash*, or mystical sense: this enlarged on. Why God should choose thus to express matters, we need not determine: some probable reasons offered.

These things being premised, we come to our particular case, and say, that according to what our Lord and his Apostles teach, the Messiah's sufferings were in divers passages of the ancient Scriptures *prefigured*. Peculiar reasons why they should be so, supposing the thing itself determined to be: on the same supposition it is plain that the passages about Abel, Isaac, Josias, Jeremiah, and the like, may congruously be applied thereto; also the elevation of the brazen serpent, the paschal lamb, the Jewish priests and sacrifices, &c.; but still more the afflictions of King David. Which being admitted, on a comparison of the passages with what befel Jesus, we may observe an admirable harmony; there being scarcely any part of his affliction during life, or any circumstance thereof at his death, which is not in express and emphatical terms there set out: this fully shown by quotations.

II. But farther, there are not only such oblique intimations of this matter, shrouded under the coverture of other persons and names; but very direct and immediate predictions concerning the Messiah's being to suffer, most clearly expressed. That

whole famous chapter of Isaiah, the 53rd, specified; wherein the kind, manner, causes, ends, and consequences of his sufferings, together with his behaviour under them, are graphically represented. More passages brought forward from the other prophets; from which we may well conclude with our Lord, *That thus it was written, and thus* (according to prophecy) *it was to happen, that the Christ should suffer.*

III. That it was to fall out thus might also well be inferred from reasons grounded on the qualities of the Messiah's person, and on the nature of his performances, such as they are described in prophetical Scripture; as that he was to be really, and plainly to appear, a person of the most admirable virtue and goodness; but there never was nor can be such, without the trial of great affliction: that he was to be an universal pattern to all men (especially to the poor and afflicted) of *all righteousness*; to exemplify the most difficult pieces of duty, *humility, self-denial, resignation* to the divine will, &c.: which he could not have had the opportunity of doing, had he been prosperous and splendid in worldly affairs. This topic enlarged on.

Now that Jesus did thoroughly correspond to whatever is thus predicted concerning the Messias, need not be declared: it is notorious; and no adversary can deny it. Conclusion.

SERMON LXXVI.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST FORETOLD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

ACTS, CHAP. III.—VERSE 18.

But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

MANY good arguments there are, different in kind, which conspire to persuade the truth of our religion; such as are the intrinsic reasonableness, excellency, and perfection of its doctrine; the miraculous works performed in attestation thereto; the special favor of Providence declared in the support and propagation thereof: but on no other ground do the Scriptures so much build its truth, and our obligation to embrace it, as on the exact correspondence and conformity thereof to all the ancient Scriptures, which did foreshow or foretell its revelation and introduction into the world; to those especially which described the personal characters, circumstances, and performances of our Lord: to this our Lord, in his discourses and disputes with incredulous people, referred them; 'Search the Scriptures,' said he, 'because in them ye expect to have eternal life; (that is, to find the true way of saving truth leading thereto;) and those are they which testify of me:' by this he instructed and convinced his disciples; 'beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself:' and, 'These (said he to them presently before his departure) are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things

must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me:' this the Apostles, in all their preaching, (whereby they taught, proved, and persuaded the Christian doctrine,) did chiefly insist on: 'Moses,' saith St. Peter, 'truly said unto the Fathers, yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days;' and, 'To him,' saith he again, 'give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' And of St. Paul it is said, that 'he mightily convinced the Jews—showing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ;' and —'he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets:' thus the chief Apostles and founders of our religion in their public discourses; and in their Epistles they observe the same method; as particularly asserting Christian doctrines and duties by the testimonies of prophetical Scriptures, so generally affirming our religion to be chiefly grounded on them; 'of which salvation' (saith St. Peter, concerning the salvation exhibited by the gospel) 'the prophets did inquire, and search diligently, who prophesied of the grace to come unto you;' and (in regard to the conviction of others) he seems to prefer the attestation of this kind before the special revelation immediately made to the Apostles; for having spoken of it, he subjoins, *καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον*· 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye do take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.' And St. Paul saith, that 'the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, was then made manifest, and by the prophetical Scriptures, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, to the obedience of faith;' and, 'The holy writings,' he telleth Timothy, 'were able to make him wise to the salvation,' which is, 'by the faith of Jesus Christ;' that is, they were able to show and persuade to him the truth of Christianity, which promiseth salvation to all that heartily embrace it and observe its laws.

Such a stress was laid on this probation by the founders of our religion; and no wonder; for that it is not only extremely

forcible in itself, but hath some particular uses, and some peculiar advantages beyond others. The foreknowlege of future contingent events, (such as were many of those concerning our Saviour, depending on the freest acts of human will,) as it is for the manner of attaining it most incomprehensible to us, so it is most proper to God, and by all men so acknowleged; future contingencies being secrets which no man, no angel, no creature can dive into, they being not discernible in their causes, which are indeterminate; nor in themselves, who are finite. The prediction therefore of such events could not otherwise than proceed from his pleasure; neither could he yield it in way of favor and approbation to that which was not perfectly true and good: this way therefore doth absolutely confirm the truth and goodness of Christian doctrine; it withal manifests the great worth and weight thereof, as implying the particular regard and care God had of it, designing it so anciently, laying trains of providence toward it, and preparing such evidences for the confirmation thereof; it together into the bargain maintaineth the truth of the Jewish dispensation, the sincerity of the ancient patriarchs and prophets, and the vigilant care the divine goodness hath always had over the state of religion, and toward the welfare of mankind; never leaving it destitute of some immediate revelations from himself. It had a peculiar aptitude to convert the Jews, who were possessed with a full persuasion concerning the veracity and sanctity of their ancient prophets; and could not therefore doubt concerning the truth of that, which appeared conformable to that which they had foretold should be declared and dispensed for their benefit. This probation also hath this advantage, that it singly taken doth suffice to convince; whereas others can hardly do it otherwise than in conjunction with one another, and especially with its aid: for the goodness of the doctrine may be contested in some points; and however good it seem, it may be imputed to human invention: strange effects may be deemed producible by other causes beside divine power; and they may be suffered to be done for other ends than for confirmation of truth; they are also commonly transient, and thence most liable to doubt. Providence also is in many cases so mysterious and unsearchable, that the incredulous will never allow any inferences to be

drawn from it: but the plain correspondence of events to the standing records of ancient prophecies (obvious and conspicuous to every one that will consult and compare them) concerning a person to be sent by God, who should have such circumstances, and be so qualified, who should in God's name preach such doctrines and perform such works, is a proof, which alone may assure any man, that such a person doth come from God, and is in what he declareth or doeth approved by him: no counterfeiting can here find place; no evasion can be devised from the force of this proof.

This way therefore of discourse our Lord and his Apostles (whose business it was by the most proper and effectual methods to subdue the reasons of men to the obedience of faith and entertainment of Christian truth) did especially use; as generally in respect to all things concerning our Lord, so particularly in regard to his passion; declaring it to happen punctually according to what had been foreseen by God, and thence foreshowed by his prophets, rightly understood; 'He took the twelve,' saith St. Luke of our Lord, 'and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished: for he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death.' And again, after his resurrection, he thus reproves his disciples; 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:' 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.' They did not then (partly being blinded with prejudice, partly not having used due industry, and perhaps not excelling in natural capacity, however not yet being sufficiently enlightened by divine grace) apprehend, or discern, that according to the prophetical instructions our Lord was so to suffer; but afterward, when he had 'opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,' they did see, and specially urge this point: then St. Peter declared that 'the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, did testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;' then it was their manner to reason (as is said of St. Paul) 'out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ

must needs have suffered: saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer:' 'delivering first of all, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures:' this is that which in my text St. Peter doth insist on, affirming about the passion of Christ, that it not only had been predicted by one, or more, but foreshowed by an universal consent of all the prophets; to illustrate and confirm which assertion of his, is the scope of our present discourse: to perform which, after having briefly touched the state of the matter in hand, we shall apply ourselves.

That the Messias was to come in an humble and homely manner; (without appearance of worldly splendor or grandeur;) that he was to converse among men in a state of external poverty and meanness; that he was to cause offences, and find oppositions in his proceedings; that he was to be repulsed and rejected, to be hated and scorned, to be disgracefully and harshly treated, to be grievously persecuted and afflicted; yea, that at last he was to be prosecuted, condemned, and executed as a malefactor, is a truth indeed, which the Jews (although they firmly believed and earnestly expected the coming of a Messias) did not, and indeed were hardly capable to entertain. It was a point repugnant to the whole frame of their conceits; yea, inconsistent with the nature and drift of their religion, as they did understand it; for their religion in its surface (deeper than which their gross fancy could not penetrate) did represent earthly wealth, dignity, and prosperity, as things most highly valuable; did propound them as very proper, if not as the sole rewards of piety and obedience; did imply consequently the possession of them to be certain arguments of the divine goodwill and regard: they could not therefore but esteem poverty, affliction, and disgrace, as curses from heaven, and plain indications of God's disfavor toward those on whom they fell: they particularly are said to have conceited that to be rich was a needful qualification for a prophet; (no less needful than to be of a good complexion, of a good capacity, of a good conversation and life:) *Spiritus Dei non requiescit super pauperem*, 'the Spirit of God doth not rest on a poor man;' (that is, no special communications of grace, or of wisdom and goodness,

are by God ever afforded to persons of a low and afflicted condition;) being a maxim, which they had framed, and which currently passed among them: that he therefore, who was designed to be so notable a prophet; who was to have the honor of being so special an instrument of promoting God's service and glory; who therefore should be so highly favored by God, that he should appear despicable, and undergo great afflictions, was a notion that could not but seem very absurd; that could not otherwise than be very abominable to them. They had farther (in congruity to these prejudices, abetted by that extreme self-love and self-flattery, which were peculiar to that nation) raised in themselves a strong opinion that the Messias was to come in a great visible state and power; to achieve deeds of mighty prowess and renown; to bring the nations of the world into subjection under him; and so to reign among them in huge majesty and prosperity. When Jesus therefore (however otherwise answerable in his circumstances, qualifications, and performances, to the prophetical characters of the Messias) did first appear such as he did, with some pretences, or intimations rather, that he was the Messias, their stomach presently rose at it; they were exceedingly scandalised at him; they deemed him not only a madman (one possessed or distracted) and an impostor, but a blasphemer; for no less than blasphemy they took it to be for so mean and pitiful a wretch (as to their eyes he seemed) to assume unto himself so high a dignity, and so near a relation unto God, as being the Messias did import. We even see the disciples themselves of our Lord so deeply imbued with this national prejudice, that, even after they had avowed him for the Christ, they could scarce with patience hear him foretelling what grievous things should befall him: St. Peter himself, on that occasion, even just after he seriously had confessed him to be the Christ, 'did,' as it is expressed, 'take him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord:' yea, presently after that our Lord most plainly had described his sufferings to them, they could not forbear dreaming of a kingdom, and of being grandees therein: yea, farther, even after our Lord's passion and resurrection, this fancy still possessed them; for even then they demanded of him whether he would 'at that time restore the

kingdom unto Israel ;' meaning such an external visible kingdom.

Hence of all things, notifying the Messias, this seemeth to be the only particular, which in general the Jews did not, or would not, see and acknowlege; and this caused them to oversee all other glorious marks, how clearly soever shining in and about the person of Jesus: this cloud hindered them from discerning the excellency of his doctrine, from regarding the sanctity of his life, from being duly affected with the wonderfulness of his works, from minding, or from crediting all the testimonies from heaven ministered unto him; this, as St. Paul telleth us, was the main scandal, which obstructed their embracing the gospel. As it was their ignorance or error in this point, which disposed them to persecute our Lord; (*nisi enim ignoratus nihil pati posset*, as Tertullian saith;* ' if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,' saith St. Paul;) so it was that which maintained their obstinate hatred of his name and memory; although graced with so illustrious testimonies of divine power and providence.

We cannot therefore here, as in other particulars concerning our Lord, allege the general consent of God's people in expounding the prophets according to our sense, this being one of those points in respect to which the prophets themselves did foresee and foretel their perverse stupidity and incredulity; that ' they should look, and not see; hear, and not understand;' yielding herein special occasion to that complaint, ' Who hath believed our report?' Yet notwithstanding their affected and culpable blindness, there is no particular concerning the Messias in the ancient Scriptures, either more frequently in way of mystical insinuation and adumbration glanced at, or more clearly in direct and plain language expressed; or which also by reasonable deduction thence may be more strongly inferred, than this.

1. I say, first, it is frequently glanced at by mystical insinuations; for explaining the intent of which assertion, we shall premise somewhat, which may serve to declare the pertinency of many citations produced out of the ancient Scripture in the

* Tert. in Marc. iii. 6.

New Testament; the which, together with others connected with them, or bearing just analogy to them, we also, being assured of their design by the authority of our Lord and his Apostles, may safely presume after them to apply to the same purposes.

We may then consider that the all-wise God, (who 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,' and 'to whom all things are present,') having 'before eternal times,' as St. Paul speaketh, determined in due time to send the Messias, for accomplishing the greatest design that ever was to be managed in this world, (that which should bring the highest glory to himself, and procure the richest benefits to the principal of his creatures here,) did by his incomprehensible providence so order things, that all the special dispensations preceding it should have a fit tendency and an advantageous reference thereto; so that, when it came on the stage, it might appear that the main of the plot consisted therein; and that whatever was acted before had principally a respect thereto. As therefore from the beginning of things God did in a gradual method make real preparations towards it, by several steps imparting discoveries of his mind about it, or in order thereto, (somewhat to Adam himself, more to Abraham and the Patriarchs, somewhat farther to Moses, much more yet to divers of the prophets, among his chosen people, who not only foretold largely concerning it, but delivered divers kinds of instruction conformable to it, and conducible to the promoting and entertainment thereof,) so he did also take especial care by many apposite representations, (νοητὰ θεωρήματα, 'intelligible spectacles,' or objects of mental speculation, Eusebius calleth them,*) handsomely inserted into all his dispensations, to set it out, and to insinuate his meaning about it; that so it might at length show itself with more solemnity and less surprise: the most eminent persons therefore, whom he raised up, and employed in his affairs, tending to that end, as they did resemble the Messias, in being instruments of God's particular grace and providence, (being indeed inferior Christs and Mediators, partial Saviours and Redeemers of his people, as they are sometimes called;)

* Hist. i. 3.

so they were ordered in several circumstances of their persons, in divers actions they performed, in the principal accidents befalling them, to represent him: (becoming εἰκονικοὶ Χριστοὶ, Christs in image, as Eusebius* again styleth them:) the rites also and services of religion instituted by them in God's name were adapted to the same purpose; they and all things about them, by God's especial direction and wise care, being fitted so as to be congruous emblems and shadows prefiguring Christ, and whatever appertained to him: thus was Adam, as St. Paul calleth him, 'a type of Christ;' and Abel, Melchisedec, Isaac, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Zorobabel† are intimated to have been such; the most signal things done by them, or befalling them, having been suited to answer somewhat remarkable concerning him; so that we may say of them all, as the Apostle to the Hebrews did of the Jewish priests, 'they served to the subindication and shadowing of heavenly things.' In David particularly this relation is so plain, that because thereof, in the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea, the Messias is called by his name; as if he were revived in the Messias. It indeed well suited the dignity of this great personage, and the importance of his business, that he should have appointed so notable heralds and harbingers to 'go before his face;' furnished with conspicuous ensigns and badges denoting their relation to him. It was proper that God should appear to have had always an express regard toward him: it consequently doth serve to our edification; for that we duly comparing things, and espying this admirable correspondency, may be instructed thereby, and established in our faith; may be excited to the admiration of God's wisdom, so harmoniously connecting things, and of his goodness, so provident for our welfare; may also be induced thereby the more highly to adore the Messias, and to esteem his design: such uses St. Paul signifieth, when having compared divers things concerning Moses to things concerning Christ, he saith, 'All these things happened as types, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.'

It is also (both for illustration and proof of these things) to

* Hist. i. 14. † Vid. Euseb. ibid.

be observed, that because those eminent servants of God were representatives of Christ, many things are spoken of them as such; many things are ascribed to them, which only or chiefly were intended of him; their names are used as veils to cover divers things concerning him, which it seemed to divine wisdom not so convenient in a more open and clear manner to disclose promiscuously to all men. That this observation is true; that I say, under the names of persons representing Christ (or of things, we may add, adumbrating his things) many things are intimated principally concerning him and his dispensations, may be collected and confirmed from hence, that many things are attributed to persons (and to things also) which do not agree to them; many things were promised which appear never accomplished, except after an improper and hyperbolical manner of expression, or according to an enormous wideness of interpretation; such as do not well seem to suit the nature of true histories and serious promises: thus for instance, many things are foretold concerning the large extent and prosperous state of the Jewish church; which history and experience do testify never (according to strictness of literal acception, yea not in any tolerable degree, near the height of what the words import) to have come to pass: thus also, as the Apostle to the Hebrews argueth, effects are attributed to the Jewish rites and sacrifices, which according to the nature of things cannot belong to them, otherwise than as substitutes and shadows of things more high in substance and efficacy: thus also what is with solemn oath promised to Solomon (concerning the vast extent and endless duration of his empire in righteousness, peace, and prosperity; together with his mighty acts and successful achievements) doth not appear directly in any competent measure to have been accomplished: thus also David (as St. Peter in the 2nd of the Acts observeth, and groundeth his argumentation on it) speaketh divers things of himself, which cannot be conceived properly and literally agreeable to him: such things therefore (having some truth under them) are reasonably supposed to be intimations of somewhat appertaining to the future more perfect state of things under the Messias; to concern him (who was to be the end of the law) and his dispensation, which was to be the accomplishment of all things predicted and pre-

signified: this is that which St. Austin signifieth, when he saith of Christ, that 'Him all the promises of the Jewish nation, all their prophecies, priesthoods, sacrifices, their temple, and all their sacraments whatever did resound,' or express.

Neither are these things only said according to suppositions assumed in the New Testament; but they agree, as to their general importance, to the sense of the ancient Jews, who did conceive such mysterious references often to lie couched under the letter of the Scriptures: they did suppose everywhere a *midrash*, or mystical sense; which they very studiously (even to an excess of curiosity and diligence) searched after: it was a constant and confident opinion of their doctors, that all things in Moses's law were typical, and capable of allegorical exposition; and Philo's writings* (composed immediately after our Saviour's times) do show that opinion then to have been passable. We have also several instances and intimations thereof in the New Testament: neither is it probable that our Lord and the Apostles would, in their discourses and disputations with the Jews, have used this way of alleging and interpreting passages of Scripture, if they in general had not admitted and approved it.

Why God should choose to express matters of this nature in such a manner, we need not to determine; it might be perhaps for reasons only known to himself, above our ken or cognisance; yet divers probable reasons may be assigned for it, yea some more than probable, seeing they are expressed or hinted in Scripture. It might be for a decent and harmonious discrimination of times, of dispensations, of persons; it might be from the depth of things to conciliate reverence to them, and to raise the price of knowing them, by the difficulty of attaining thereto: it might be by exercise to improve the understandings of men, to inflame their desire, to excite their industry, to provoke their devotion, to render them modest and humble; it might be for occasion to reward an honest and diligent study of God's word, and to convey special gifts of interpretation; it might be to conceal some things from some persons unworthy or unfit to know them, especially from haughty and self-conceited per-

* Vid. Capell. in Exerc. ad Zohar.

sons; it might be to use the ignorance of some as a means to produce some great events; such as was the misusing and persecuting our Lord: for such reasons it might be, and there is no good reason against it; for it cannot be supposed necessary that all things should be plainly discovered at all times and to all persons; it is evident that some things are couched in parabolical and mysterious expressions; it is particularly the manner of prophetical instruction frequently to involve things, the full and clear knowlege of which is not congruous to every season, nor suitable to every capacity; but reserved for times and persons, for which the divine wisdom only knows them most proper.

These things being thus premised, we come to our particular case, and say, that (according to what our Lord and his Apostles teach) the Messiah's being to suffer was in divers passages of the ancient Scripture prefigured. Supposing the thing itself determined to be, there are peculiar reasons why it rather so, than in a more open manner, should be represented, contained in those words of Tertullian: 'The sacrament indeed,' saith he, 'of Christ's passion ought to have been figured in the (ancient) predications; forasmuch as that the more incredible it was, (if it should have been preached nakedly,) the more offensive it would have been; and the more magnificent it was, the more it was to be overshadowed, that the difficulty of understanding it might be cause of seeking of God's grace.'* Supposing it also that it should be, it is plain that the passages about Abel, Isaac, Josias, Jeremiah, and the like, may congruously be applied thereto; that the elevation of the brazen serpent, and the slaying the paschal lamb may appositely represent it; the Jewish priests, with all their sacrifices, may also with reason be brought in, and accommodated thereto: these things indeed by themselves solitarily are not apt peremptorily to evince that it should be; yet do they handsomely suit it, and adorn the supposition thereof; according to the notion premised about the figurative relation between the matters of the old world before the Messias, and the new one after him. But with a clearer evidence and stronger force we may affirm that the Messiah's sufferings

*Tert. in Jud. 10.

were implied in the afflictions ascribed to his representative king David, such as he in several Psalms (in the 35th, 69th, 109th, 118th, and especially in the 22nd Psalm) describeth them; wherein divers passages, expressing the extreme sadness and forlornness of his condition, occur, which by the history of his life do not so well, according to the literal signification of words, appear congruous to his person; which therefore there is a necessity, or at least much reason, that they should be applied to the Messias, whom that holy king did represent.

Which being admitted, comparing the passages we find there to that which befel Jesus, we may observe an admirable harmony; there being scarce any part of his affliction in his life, or any circumstance thereof at his death, which is not in express and emphatical terms there set out. There we have expressed his low and despicable estate; ('I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and despised of the people:')—the causeless hatred and enmity of the populace and of the great ones toward him; ('They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty; they compassed me about with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause:')—the ingrateful requital for all the good intended and performed by him; ('They rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love:')—their rejecting him; ('The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner:')—their insidious and calumnious proceedings against him; ('Without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.' And, 'False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.' And, 'The mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue:')—their bitter insulting over him in his affliction; ('But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together; yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me:') 'They persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded: καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄλγος τῶν τραυμάτων μου προσέθηκαν, 'and to the smart of my wounds they have added;' (say the LXX.)—their scornful reviling, flouting, and mocking him; ('All they that see me laugh

me to scorn; they shoot the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him.' And, 'I became a reproach unto them; when they looked on me, they shaked their heads:' 'They opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.' Ἐπείρασάν με, ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με μυκτηρισμὸν, ἔβρυξαν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν· 'They tempted me, they extremely mocked me, they gnashed their teeth on me:')—their cruel and contemptuous usage of him; ('Dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare on me:')—their abusive dealing with him, when he in his distress called for some refreshment; ('They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink:')—their disposal of his garments on his suffering; ('They part my garments among them, and cast lots on my vesture:')—his being deserted of his friends and followers, and thence destitute of all consolation; ('I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children;—I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none:')—the sense of God's withholding his favor and help; ('My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me?')—his charitable disposition and demeanor toward his enemies and persecutors; ('But as for me, when they were sick, ('when they did trouble me,' say the LXX.) my clothing was sackcloth:' 'I humbled myself with fasting, and my prayer returned into my own bosom. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.') Which passages, and the like, how patly and punctually they do square to respective passages in the gospels, I need not to show; we do, I presume, all of us well enough remember that both most doleful and comfortable history, to be able ourselves to make the application.

2. But there farther are not only such oblique intimations, or significations of this matter, shrouded under the coverture of other persons and names; but very direct and immediate predictions concerning the Messiah's being to suffer most clearly

expressed: that whole famous chapter (the 53rd) of Isaiah doth most evidently and fully declare it, wherein the kind, manner, causes, ends, and consequences of his sufferings, together with his behavior under them, are graphically represented: his appearing meanness, ('He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him:')—the disgrace, contempt, repulses, and rejection he underwent,) 'He is despised and rejected of men—we hid our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not:') his afflicted state, ('He is a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted:')—the bitter and painful manner of his affliction, ('He was stricken; he bare stripes; he was wounded and bruised:') —his being accused, adjudged, and condemned as a malefactor, ('He was taken from prison and from judgment—he was numbered among the transgressors:')—his death consequent, ('He poured out his soul unto death; he was cut out of the land of the living:')—the design and end of his sufferings; they were appointed and inflicted by divine Providence for our sake, and in our stead; for the expiation of our sins, and our salvation; ('It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin—he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was on him, and with his stripes we are healed—surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows—for the transgression of my people he was stricken—the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all:') —his sustaining all this with a willing, quiet, humble patience, and perfect meekness, ('He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth:')—his charitable praying for his persecutors, and designing their welfare, ('He made intercession for the transgressors:')—the blessed consequences and happy success of his sufferings, in the conversion and justification of men; in performing God's will and work: in being satisfied, rewarded, and exalted himself, ('He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and

shall be satisfied: by his knowlege shall my righteous servant justify many:—I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong:') which passages, as they do most exactly suit unto Jesus, and might in a sort constitute a true historical narration of what he did endure, together with the doctrines delivered in the gospel concerning the intents and effects of his sufferings, so that they did, according to the intention of the divine spirit, relate to the Messias, may from several considerations be made apparent; the context and coherence of all this passage with the matters precedent and subsequent, the which plainly do respect the Messias and his times, do argue it: 'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!' and, 'Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,' &c. are passages immediately going before; to which this chapter is knit in way of continuation; and immediately after it doth follow, 'Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear,' &c. being a no less perspicuous than elegant description of the church, enlarged by accession of the Gentiles, which was to be brought to pass by the Messias. The general scope of this whole prophecy enforceth the same conclusion; and the incongruity of this particular prediction to any other person imaginable beside the Messias doth farther evince it: so high are the things ascribed to the suffering person; as that he should 'bear the sins of all God's people, and heal them;' that he should 'by his knowlege justify many,' (or the multitude;) that 'the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand' to these grand purposes; that God would 'divide him a portion with the great, and that he should divide the spoil with the strong:' the magnificency and importance of which sayings (rightly understood and weighed) do well agree with the Messias, but not to any other person, or simple man: whence if the ancient Jews had reason to believe a Messias was to come, (as they with general consent did suppose they had,) they had as much reason to apply this place, as any other, to him, and thence to acknowlege that he was designed to be an eminent sufferer. And indeed divers of the ancient Targumists and most learned Rabbins did expound this place of the one Messias, which was to come; as the *Pugio fidei*, and other learned writers, do by several ex-

press testimonies declare. This place also discovereth the vanity of that figment, devised by some later Jews; who, to evade it, and to oppose Jesus, have affirmed there was to be a double Messias; one who should be much afflicted; another who should greatly prosper; since we may observe that here both great afflictions and glorious performances concurrently are ascribed to the same person.

The same things are by parts also clearly foretold in other places of this prophet, and in other prophetical scriptures; by Isaiah again in the chapter immediately preceding, 'Behold,' saith God there, 'my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high:' there is God's servant (he, who in way of excellency is such, that is, in the style of this prophet, the Messias) in his real glorious capacity. It followeth concerning his external appearance; 'His visage was so marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men.' And again, in the 49th chapter; 'Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship.' What can be more express and clear, than that it is signified here that the Messias, who should subject the world, with its sovereign powers, to the acknowlegement and veneration of himself, was to be despised by men, to be detested by the Jewish people, to appear in a servile and base condition? The same prophet doth again, in the 50th chapter, bring him in speaking thus; 'I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.' His offending the Jews, so as thereby to aggravate their sins, and accelerate their punishments, is also thus expressed by the same prophet; 'And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.'

The Prophet Zechariah doth also in several places very roundly express his sufferings, his low condition in those words; 'Behold, thy king cometh unto thee; lowly, and riding on an ass;' (that is, pauper, mean and sorry to appearance.) His manner of death in those words: 'Awake, O sword, against

my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.' And again; 'I will pour on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn,' &c. The Prophet Daniel also in that place, from which probably the name Messias was taken, and which most expressly mentioneth him, saith, that 'after sixty-two weeks the Messias shall be cut off, but not for himself.' Now from all these passages of Scripture (beside divers others to the same purpose, observable by those whose industry is assisted by divine illumination) we may well conclude with our Lord, "Οτι οὕτω γέγραπται, καὶ οὕτως ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστόν· 'That thus it was written, and thus (according to the prophet's foreshowing) it was to happen, that the Christ should suffer;' suffer in a life of penury and disgrace, in a death of sorrow and shame.

3. That it was to fall out thus, might also be well inferred by reasons grounded on the qualities of the Messiah's person, and on the nature of his performances, such as they are described in prophetical Scripture: he was to be really, and plainly to appear, a person of most admirable virtue and goodness; but never (as even Pagan philosophers have observed) was, or can there be any such without undergoing the trial of great affliction. He was to be an universal pattern to men of all sorts (especially to the greatest part of men, that is, to the poor and afflicted) of 'all righteousness;' to exemplify particularly the most difficult pieces of duty; (humility, patience, meekness, charity, self-denial, intire resignation to God's will:) this he should not have had opportunity or advantage of doing, should he have been high, wealthy, splendid, and prosperous in secular matters: he was to exercise great pity and sympathy toward all mankind; toward the doing which it was requisite that he should himself taste and feel the inconveniences, troubles, pains, and sorrows incident to us. He was to advance the repute of spiritual goods and eternal blessings, depressing the value of these corporeal and temporal things, which men do so fondly admire and dote on: the most compendious and effectual way of doing which was by an exemplary ne-

glect or rejection of worldly glories and enjoyments; refusing the honors, profits, and pleasures here, adjoined to a high state. He was by the most kindly, gentle, and peaceable means to erect a spiritual kingdom; by pure force of reason to subdue the hearts and consciences of men to the love and obedience of God; by wise instruction to raise in us the hopes of future recompenses in heaven; to the accomplishment of which purposes temporal glory (working on the carnal apprehensions and affections of men) had rather been prejudicial than conducible. He was to accomplish and manage his great designs by means supernatural and divine, the which would surely become more conspicuous by the visible meanness and impotency of his state. He was also most highly to merit from God, for himself, and for us; (to merit God's high approbation of what he did, God's favor and grace to us;) this he could not perform so well, as by willingly enduring, for God's sake, and in our behalf, the most hard and grievous things. He was, in fine, designed 'perfectly to save us,' and consequently to appease God's wrath, to satisfy divine justice, to expiate our sins; whereto it was requisite that he should undergo what we had deserved, being punished and afflicted for us.

Now that Jesus our Lord did most thoroughly correspond to whatever is in this kind declared by the prophets concerning the Messias, we need not, by minutely relating the known history of his life and death, make out any farther, since the whole matter is palpably notorious, and no adversary can deny it: I shall therefore conclude, that it is a clear and certain truth, which St. Peter in our text affirmeth, that 'those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.'

Now, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.' Amen.

'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON LXXVII.

ACTS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 38.

AMONG the various reasonable grounds and ends of observing festival solemnities, the two principal are these:

1. The occasion which they afford to consider, and to instruct ourselves and others in the mysterious doctrines of our religion.

2. The engaging us seasonably to practise that great duty to God, the remembering and praising him for his great favors and mercies.

For these purposes chiefly did God himself appoint the Jewish festivals: instance of the Passover. In compliance with which prudent design the Christian church has recommended to her children the observation of her chief festivals, continuing the time and name, though changing or improving the matter and reason of those ancient ones: farther observations on this point.

The sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, commemorated, as it were, on the anniversary of Christ's passion. The effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost corresponded with the time when the Jews were obliged to *rejoice before the Lord*, for the harvest newly gathered in, and the earth's good fruits bestowed on them; and then did God bountifully impart the first-fruits of his holy Spirit: farther observations on this point.

The benefit therefore and blessing, which at this time we are bound to commemorate, is in effect the publication and establishment of the Evangelical covenant, the foundation of all

our hopes, and claims to happiness; but more immediately and directly the donation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian church, and to all its members. The nature and design thereof briefly declared.

God's gracious design was to reclaim mankind from their ignorance, errors, and sins, and to reconcile them to himself by the mediation of his Son, whom he sent to instruct them in their duty, &c. But to render this successful according to the capacities of human nature, it was requisite to provide convincing arguments to persuade men of the truth of these things; means to excite their attention to them; motives to accept them; and a power also to retain them firm in their belief, and uphold them in the performance of the conditions required.

To prevent therefore the disappointment of his merciful intentions, God to the ministry of his eternal wisdom adjoined the efficacy of his eternal love and blessed Spirit, the which not only conducted our divine Saviour into his earthly tabernacle, but did continually reside with him, and attend him in the performance of his miraculous works, attesting the truth of his quality, commission, and doctrine, and exciting men to notice these things. Nay, farther to induce them to comply with these gracious overtures, he faithfully promised that he would impart the same blessed Spirit, as the continual guide and comforter of all who should sincerely embrace them, and conform their lives to his righteous laws.

Now although the natural and ordinary manner of this divine Spirit's operation is not by violent and sensible impressions, but rather in way of imperceptible penetration, hardly discovering itself except by its results; and though its proper and principal effects relate to the furthering our performance of the conditions of our salvation; yet more fully to satisfy the doubtful, confound the obstinate, and confirm the faithful, God was pleased, after our Lord's ascension, to dispense both to teachers and disciples more liberal and extraordinary communi-

cation of that Holy Spirit, attended with wonderful effects, &c.

The Christian church therefore obliges us at this time to commemorate that incomparable gift, then conferred more visibly on the church, and still really bestowed on every particular member who is duly incorporated into it.

It is so bestowed, that is, on each member; for the evangelical covenant extends to every Christian, and a principal ingredient thereof is the collation of this spirit: this fully shown from Holy Scripture. Shown also to have been the doctrine constantly, and with very general consent delivered down in the Catholic church. Hence it may be worth while to consider the worth and excellency of this divine gift.

That it is transcendently valuable, we may hence generally collect; that even in our Lord's esteem it did not only countervail, but in a manner surmount the benefit of his presence. *It is*, said he, *expedient for you that I go away*, &c.: this point enlarged on. A more distinct survey of its benefits instituted.

1. We owe to the Holy Spirit our spiritual state and being; our spiritual life, freedom, and honorable condition. By virtue of this *quickening Spirit* we are raised from death to an immortal state of life, being *quickened together with Christ.* We are enfranchised from intolerable slavery, from the *spirit of bondage unto fear*, &c. We are also advanced to an honorable condition, ennobled with illustrious relations, and intitled to glorious privileges: for thence *we have access unto the Father, and are no more strangers, but fellow-citizens of the Saints, and of the household of God:* this point enlarged on.

2. Neither only relatively and extrinsically is our estate thus bettered, but we ourselves are answerably changed and amended by the same Holy Spirit; being, as St. Paul says, *renewed in the spirit of our mind;* becoming *new creatures, created according to God in righteousness.*

Such doctrines, as that our happiness consists not in affluence of temporal enjoyments, but in a disposition of mind curbing our appetites and quelling our passions; in conformity of practice to rules distasteful to our sense; in gaining and retaining the love of an Infinite Being; that naked goodness is to be preferred before all the pomp and glory of this world, &c.; such doctrines are indeed hard and harsh to us, absurd to our natural conceits, and abominable to our carnal minds: of our own accord, without divine attraction, we never should come to Christ. His own disciples struggled against such doctrines, and without the aid of the Spirit would scarcely have admitted many evangelical truths.

As for the mighty sages of the world, the *wise men according to the flesh*, they were far more ready to deride than to admit them. Though some few sparks of divine knowlege may have been driven out by rational consideration and philosophical study, yet no external instruction, no interior discourse, could remove the mists of ignorance, and awaken the lethargic stupidity of their souls: this topic enlarged on.

Thus is the light of spiritual knowlege, together with a temper of mind disposed to receive it, communicated by the Holy Spirit. But farther than this, by the same divine power is imparted vital heat and vigor, active strength and courage. Though our spirit should be *willing*, yet our flesh is *weak*, &c.: knowlege therefore and willingness to do good are not alone sufficient: this topic fully enlarged on and illustrated.

3. The continued subsistence and preservation of our spiritual being, and active powers, the actual use and exercise of them, all our discreet conduct, all our good practice, rely on the Holy Spirit. It is true of our spiritual, no less than of our natural life; *if he doth avert his face we are troubled*, &c. On all occasions we need his direction, aid, and comfort; for *the way of man is not in himself*, &c. We are vain and fickle in our purposes, slow in our proceedings; apt to faint and stumble

in our practice; we need therefore this sure oracle and faithful friend, to guide, encourage, and support us; to guard us in trials; comfort us in afflictions; and impart to us joy unspeakable in believing and well-doing. So many and great are the blessings which he imparts to us. Concluding exhortations.

SERMON LXXVII.

A WHIT-SUNDAY SERMON OF THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

ACTS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 38.

—— And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

AMONG the divers reasonable grounds and ends of the observing festival solemnities, (such as are comforting the poor by hospitable relief, refreshing the weary laborer by cessation from ordinary toil, maintaining good-will among neighbors by cheerful and free conversation, quickening our spirits and raising our fancies by extraordinary representations and divertisements, infusing and preserving good humor in people; such as are also the decent conspiring in public expressions of special reverence to God, withdrawing our minds from secular cares, and engaging them to spiritual meditations,) the two principal designs of them seem to be these.

1. The affording occasion (or rather imposing a constraint on us) with a competent frequency to attend unto, to consider on, to instruct ourselves and others in the mysterious doctrines and institutions of our religion.

2. The engaging us seasonably to practise that great duty of thankfully remembering and praising God for those eminent mercies and favors, which by his great grace and goodness have been vouchsafed to us.

For these purposes chiefly did God himself appoint the Jewish festivals; for instance, the Passover, the reason of which being instituted is thus expressed; 'that thou mayest

remember the day, when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life:' which words imply that the observation of that solemnity did serve to preserve the memory, yea the continual remembrance of that so notable a blessing, which otherwise might have been totally forgotten, or seldom considered; the same did also suggest occasion of inquiry concerning the reasons of its appointment, procuring consequently needful information in that material point of their religion; as doth appear by those words of God, 'And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover—.'

In compliance with which prudent designs, the Christian church, from her first infancy, hath embraced the opportunity of recommending to her children the observation of her chief holy festivals, continuing the time, and retaining the name, although changing or improving the matter and reason of those ancient ones;* the divine Providence concurring to further such proceeding, by so ordering the events of things, that the seasons of dispensing the evangelical blessings should fall in with those, wherein the legal benefits most resembling and representing them were commemorated; that so there might be as well a happy coincidence of time, as correspondence in matter between the ancient and new solemnities; whence as the exhibition of evangelical doctrines and mysteries did meet with minds more suitably prepared to entertain them, and as less innovation from former usage did appear, (a thing observable to be respected in most, or all the positive institutions of our religion,) so withal Christians were engaged, while they considered the fresh greater mercies by God vouchsafed to them, to reflect also on the favors, from the same stock of goodness, indulged by him to his ancient people; that as those should chiefly be remembered, so these should not wholly be forgotten: thus did God dispose that our Saviour should then suffer, when the Paschal Lamb was to be offered; or that the redemption of the world from sin and misery should then be celebrated by us, when the deliverance from the Egyptian slavery was comme-

* Aug. de Civ. Dei, x. 4.

morated by them: and so (that we may approach to our purpose) at the time of Pentecost, when the Jews were obliged to 'rejoice before the Lord,' rendering thanks unto him for the harvest newly gathered in, and the earth's good fruits (the main supports and comforts of this life) were by God's blessing bestowed on them, then did God bountifully impart the first-fruits of his Holy Spirit, the food of our souls and refreshment of our hearts; then did he cause his laborers to put their sickle into the spiritual harvest; converting souls, and gathering them as mature fruits into the garners of the church.

At the very season also (which is remarkable) that the Law was delivered to the Jews, and the ancient covenant established which did happen at Pentecost, as may be probably collected from the text, and is commonly supposed by the Jewish Doctors, who therefore called this feast שמחה תורת, 'the joy (or joyful feast) of the Law,' in signification of their joy, using then to crown their heads with garlands, and strew their houses with green herbs; at that very time was the Christian law most signally promulged, and the new covenant's ratification most solemnly declared by the miraculous effusion of the divine Spirit.

The benefit therefore and blessing, which at this time we are bound especially to consider and commemorate, is in effect the publication and establishment of the covenant evangelical, the foundation of all our hopes, and all our claims to happiness; but more immediately and directly the donation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian church and to all its members; for the better understanding and more truly valuing of which most excellent benefit, let us briefly declare the nature and design thereof.

Almighty God, seeing the generality of mankind alienated from himself by gross ignorance of his duty toward him, and by habitual inclinations to violate his holy laws, (originally implanted by him in our nature, or anciently revealed to our first parents,) immersed in error, enslaved to vice, and obnoxious to the woful consequences of them, severe punishment and extreme misery; was pleased in his immense goodness and pity to design its rescue from that sad condition; and, in pursuance of that gracious design, did resolve on expedients the most admira-

ble and most efficacious that could be; for to redeem men from the tyranny of sin and hell, to reconcile them to himself, to recover them into a happy state, he sent his own only beloved Son out of his bosom into this world, clothed with our nature; by him, as by a Plenipotentiary Commissioner from himself, inviting all men to return unto him, declaring himself, by the meritorious obedience, the expiatory passion, the effectual intercession of his dear Son, abundantly satisfied for, and ready to grant a full pardon of, all offences committed against him in their state of error and estrangement; to admit them into a state of present indemnity and peace, yea to settle them in perpetual alliance and friendship with himself, on most fair and gentle terms; namely, that, renouncing their erroneous principles, and reforming their vicious courses of life, they cheerfully would embrace his merciful overtures, and thereafter conform their lives to his righteous laws; the which, together with all his good intentions concerning them, he, by the same blessed agent, clearly discovered to them; fully by him instructing them in their duty, and strongly encouraging them to the performance thereof by the promise of most bountiful rewards; his certain love and favor attended with endless joy and bliss: thus did, as St. Paul expresseth it, 'the saving grace of God appear unto all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, expecting that blessed hope.'

But to render this wonderfully gracious design successful, in a way of wisdom and reasonable proceeding, accommodated to the capacities of human nature, it was requisite that there should be provided convincing arguments to persuade men of the truth and reality of these things, (that indeed such an extraordinary agent, with such a message, was come from heaven,) effectual means of admonishing and exciting men to a heedful advertency toward them, competent motives to a cordial acceptance of them; a power also sufficient, notwithstanding their natural impotency and instability, to continue them in the belief, to uphold them in the practice of the duties prescribed, in the performance of the conditions required.

For if it were not very credible that God had truly those intentions toward us, or if we did not much regard the overture of

them, or if we did not conceive the business highly to concern us; or if, resolving to comply with the gospel, we yet were unable to discharge the conditions thereof, the design would totally be frustrated, and of itself come to nothing. To prevent which disappointment of his merciful intentions, Almighty God did abundantly provide in a manner and measure suitable to the glorious importance of them; for to the ministry of his eternal wisdom he adjoined the efficacy of his eternal love and blessed Spirit; the which not only conducted God our Saviour into his fleshly tabernacle, and with unmeasurable communications of himself did continually reside within him, but also did attend him in the conspicuous performance of numberless miraculous works, implying divine power and goodness, as exceeding not only any natural, but all created power, (such as were by mere word and will healing the sick and restoring the maimed, ejecting evil spirits, discerning the secret thoughts of men, foretelling contingent events, reviving the dead, raising himself from the grave;) which works, some expressly, others by parity of reason, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; for, 'If,' saith our Lord, 'I by the Spirit of God cast out devils'—and, 'God,' saith St. Peter, 'anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil:' and, 'Who,' saith St. Paul, 'was declared to be the Son of God, according to the Holy Spirit, by the resurrection from the dead:' so did God afford the most evident attestation that could be to the truth of our Saviour's quality, commission, and doctrine; by so clear and rousing significations did God invite men to take notice of these things.

But farther to induce them heartily to comply with these gracious overtures, and to render them thoroughly available to the purpose designed, the salvation of men, according to the terms prescribed of faith in God, and obedience to his commandments, God was pleased farther to resolve, and he faithfully did promise, that he would impart the same blessed Spirit, as a continual guide and assistant to all those who seriously would entertain those tenders of mercy, sincerely resolving the performance of the conditions.

Now although the natural and ordinary manner of this divine

Spirit's operation (like that of all spirits and more subtile substances) is not by violent and sensible impressions, but rather in way of imperceptible penetration, or gentle insinuating of itself into the subject on which it worketh, hardly discovering itself otherwise than by the notable effects resulting from it; and although likewise the proper and principal effects thereof, according to divine designation, do relate to the furthering our performance of the said conditions requisite toward our salvation, that is, to the cherishing our faith and quickening our obedience; disposing men to perform virtuous actions, rather than to achieve wondrous exploits: yet more fully to satisfy the doubtful, to convince the incredulous (to confound the obstinate) world about the truth of his intentions, more illustriously to manifest the completion of his promise, more surely to fortify the faithful against the scandals and temptations which their profession would incur, God was pleased after our Lord's ascension, and when the apostolical promulgation of the Christian doctrine did commence, to dispense both to the teachers and the disciples thereof more liberal communications of that Holy Spirit, attended with notorious, strange, and wonderful effects, apt to provoke the admiration of men, to persuade their judgments, to prevail on their affections, to produce within them strong desires of partaking so high a privilege and excellent endowment.

The memorial therefore of that most gracious and glorious dispensation, the Christian church wisely and piously hath continually preserved, obliging us at this time peculiarly to bless God for that incomparable and inestimable gift, conferred then most visibly on the church, and still really bestowed on every particular member duly incorporated thereinto.

I say bestowed on every particular member of the church; for the evangelical covenant doth extend to every Christian; and a principal ingredient thereof is the collation of this Spirit: which is the 'finger of God,' whereby (according to the prophet Jeremiah's description of that covenant) 'God's law is put into their inward parts, and written in their hearts;' 'inscribed,' as St. Paul allusively speaketh, 'not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart;' not only, as the Jewish law represented, from

without to the senses, but impressed within on the mind and affections; whence God's Spirit is called the 'Spirit of promise,' the donation thereof being the peculiar promise of the gospel; and the end of our Saviour's undertaking is by St. Paul declared, 'that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith,' that is, by embracing Christianity might partake thereof, according to God's promise; and the apostolical ministry or exhibition of the gospel is styled 'the ministration of the Spirit;' and 'tasting of the heavenly gift, and participation of the Holy Ghost,' is part of a Christian's charter; and the susception of Christianity is thus described by St. Paul; 'But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:' and our Saviour instructed Nicodemus, that 'no man can enter into the kingdom of God (that is, become a Christian, or subject of God's spiritual kingdom) without being regenerated by water, and by the Spirit,' that is, without baptism, and the spiritual grace attending it; according as St. Peter doth in the words adjoining to our text imply, that the reception of the Holy Spirit is annexed to holy baptism: 'Repent,' saith he, 'and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise (that great promise of the Holy Ghost) is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call;' that is, the Holy Spirit is promised to all, how far soever distant in place or time, whoever shall be invited unto, and shall embrace the Christian profession. St. John also maketh it to be the distinctive mark of those in whom Christ abideth, and who dwell in Christ, that is, of all true Christians, to have this Spirit; 'Hereby,' saith he, 'we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us;' and, 'Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' And St. Paul denieth him to be a good Christian who is destitute thereof: 'Now,' saith he, 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:' and, 'Know ye not,' saith he to the Corinthians, 'that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' that is, Do ye not un-

derstand this to be a common privilege of all Christians, such as ye profess yourselves to be? And the conversion of men to Christianity he thus expresseth; 'After the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by any righteous works which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' And all pious dispositions qualifying us for entrance into heaven and happiness (faith, charity, devotion, every grace, every virtue) are represented to be 'fruits of the Holy Spirit:' and the union of all Christians into one body, the catholic society of all truly faithful people, doth, according to St. Paul, result from this one Spirit, as a common soul animating and actuating them: 'For,' saith he, 'by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have all been made to drink of one Spirit.'

In fine, whatever some few persons, or some petty sects (as the Pelagians of old, the Socinians now) may have deemed, it hath been the doctrine constantly, and with very general consent delivered in the Catholic Church, that to all persons by the holy mystery of baptism duly initiated to Christianity, or admitted into the communion of Christ's body, the grace of God's Holy Spirit certainly is bestowed, enabling them to perform the conditions of piety and virtue then undertaken by them; enlightening their minds, rectifying their wills, purifying their affections, directing and assisting them in their practice; the which holy gift (if not abused, ill treated, driven away, or quenched by their ill behavior) will perpetually be continued, improved, and increased to them: it is therefore by Tertullian (in his Prescriptions against Heretics) reckoned as part of that fundamental rule, which was grounded on the general tradition and consent of the Christian Church, that 'Christ had sent the virtue of the Holy Ghost in his room, which doth act believers;' to which that article doth answer of the Apostolical Creed, in which we profess to 'believe the Holy Ghost;' meaning, I suppose, thereby not only the bare existence of the Holy Ghost, but also its gracious communication and energy.

Since therefore the collation of this eminent gift and favor

so nearly doth concern us all; seeing it is our present duty more especially to praise and bless God for it; seeing also we are wont to commensurate our gratitude to our estimation of the benefit unto which it relateth; let us a little consider the worth and excellency of this divine gift conferred on us.

That it is transcendently valuable we may in general hence collect, that even in our Lord's esteem it did not only countervail, but in a manner surmount the benefit of his presence; Συμφέρει, 'It is,' said he, 'expedient' (or profitable) 'for you that I go away;' God having designed that my absence shall be supplied by the Comforter's more beneficial presence: and wonderfully beneficial surely must that presence be, which could not only compensate, but render advantageous the loss of that most benign and sweet conversation, that tender and watchful inspection, that wholesome and powerful advice, that clear and lively pattern of all goodness shining forth in our Saviour's life on his disciples. Could there be a more indulgent Master, a more discreet Guide, a more delightful Companion, a more faithful Friend, a mightier Protector, a surer Assistant, a sweeter Comforter than he? Yes, it seemeth that our Saviour did apprehend that on some accounts those benefits with greater advantage might accrue to them by the gift of his Spirit than by his own immediate presence; that it by internal operation could more clearly inform the mind, more strongly incline the will, more vigorously affect the heart, than any exterior word or example could do: neither could our Saviour, according to the condition of his humanity, limited to particularities of time and place, so perfectly correspond to the various exigencies of mankind, as that omnipotent Spirit, intimately present to, uniformly diffused through all things: Him therefore did our Saviour leave the guardian of his otherwise orphan disciples; him did he substitute to undergo the care and tuition of them, to conduct them in the right way, to preserve them from dangers, to comfort them in distresses, to manage all their concernments, to be their counsellor, monitor, advocate, and patron; by him he meant fully to make good his word, 'that he would be with them till the end of this world.'

But more distinctly to survey the many benefits and advan-

tages proceeding from this excellent gift unto us, we may observe, that on it the foundation, the improvement, the completion of all our good and happiness do depend; that to the Holy Spirit in truth and justice are to be ascribed, 1. our better state and being; 2. our spiritual powers and abilities; 3. our good and acceptable performances; whatever we are, whatever we can do, whatever we actually do perform as Christians.

1. We owe to the Holy Spirit our spiritual state and being; our spiritual life, our freedom, our honorable condition.

It is by virtue of this 'quickening Spirit,' that from death and corruption we are raised to an immortal and indefectible state of life; that, as St. Paul saith, we, that 'were dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened together with Christ;' we by this 'incorruptible seed are born again;' not as formerly, to a life of vanity and misery, or to the enjoyment of a few transitory delights, tempered with many vexatious inconveniences, pains, and troubles; but to sure capacities of most solid and durable contentments, 'to a living hope of an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven for us.'

It is thereby we are free men, enjoying a true and perfect liberty; being enfranchised from divers intolerable slaveries, to which we naturally are subjected, and from which otherwise we could not be exempted; from the dominion of a rigorous law, which prescribeth hard duties, but doth not afford strength to perform them; apt to condemn us, but not able to convert us; from the clamorous accusations of a guilty conscience, with anxious fears of punishment, that 'spirit of bondage unto fear,' of which St. Paul speaketh; from the tyranny of a most crafty, spiteful, and cruel enemy, that wicked one who did 'captivate us at his pleasure,' and detained us under his power; from the no less unjust, no less mischievous domination of our own flesh, or natural concupiscence, imposing grievous tasks and destructive necessities on us; 'It is,' saith St. Paul, 'the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which setteth us free from the laws of sin and death;' so that, 'where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.'

From such base thraldoms we thereby are redeemed, and not only so, but are advanced to an honorable condition, are en-

nobled with illustrious relations, are intitled to glorious privileges: all the benefits and immunities contained in the charter of the new Jerusalem, all the advantages and privileges appropriated to God's court and family thereby appertain unto us; for 'we have,' saith St. Paul, 'access by one Spirit unto the Father,' and are thence 'no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God:' by this 'holy unction we are consecrated kings and priests unto God;' by participation of this 'immortal seed' we are ingrafted into alliance with the heavenly King, become children of God, brethren of Christ, heirs of Paradise, (an infinitely better Paradise than that from which we formerly were excluded;) for this is that πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας, that Spirit which constituteth us the sons of God, qualifying us to be so by dispositions resembling God, and filial affections toward him: certifying us that we are so, and causing us by a free instinct 'to cry, Abba, Father,' running into his bosom of love, and flying under the wings of his mercy in all our needs and distresses: whence 'as many as are led by the Spirit, they,' saith St. Paul, 'are the sons of God;' and, 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;' yea, which may seem yet a farther pitch of dignity, we, by intervention of this Spirit, are united and incorporated into Christ himself, being made living members of his body, partaking a common life and sense with him; by it we are compacted into the same spiritual edifice, dedicated to the worship and inhabitation of God; our bodies and souls are made temples of his divinity, thrones of his majesty, orbs of his celestial light, paradises of his blissful presence; for, 'In whom,' saith St. Paul, 'ye are built together for an inhabitation of God through the Spirit;' and, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?'

By the Holy Spirit we are instated in these unconceivably glorious privileges, and by it only we are assured of them, to our comfort; the gift of it, as it is a great part of them, and the chief cause, so it is a sure confirmation and pledge; 'Ye,' saith St. Paul, 'were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance;' and, 'It is God who did establish us with you in Christ, and anointed us, and also

sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts:' all which phrases do import the same thing, that is, a comfortable assurance concerning the reality of the benefits by divine grace exhibited and promised to us.

2. Neither only relatively and extrinsically is our state bettered and exalted from death to life, from slavery to freedom, from baseness to dignity; but ourselves answerably are changed and amended by the same Holy Spirit, with a real and intrinsical alteration, transforming us into other things, much different from what we were in our former natural state; by that 'renovation of the Holy Ghost,' of which St. Paul speaketh, we are, saith he, 'renewed in the spirit of our mind;' so that not only the decayed frame of our soul is thereby repaired and reformed, but its powers are much improved and enlarged; we are thence endued with new and better faculties, as it were; with quicker apprehensions, with sincerer judgments, with righter inclinations, with nobler passions, than we had before, yea, than we could have had in our original state; so that in the language of holy Scripture we thence become 'new men, and new creatures, created according to God in righteousness and true holiness;' according to God, that is, in conformity to the divine perfections of rectitude in mind and will, so as to resemble God in a higher degree, and more worthy respects than formerly. Our father Adam was made εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, a creature endued with life and sense, furnished with powers and appetites disposing to acquire, preserve, and enjoy the conveniences agreeable to that frame; and we naturally are ψυχικοὶ ἄνθρωποι, 'animal men;' such as naturally do apprehend, do affect, do pursue things concerning this present life; the pleasures of sense, and the satisfactions of fancy; freedom from want and pain, security from danger and disturbance, together with the means we suppose conducible to those, wealth, honor, and power; these are those 'desires of the flesh and of the mind,' the things which according to our natural temper and frame we like and approve; which most men therefore do highly value, passionately love, and earnestly seek: nor doth nature only incline us to a complacence in these things, but customary fruition greatly endeareth them to us; so that we continually improve our acquaintance, and contract a firmer

alliance with them; but spiritual and divine things ('the thing of the Spirit of God,' as St. Paul calleth them) we cannot receive; that is, simply of ourselves, without aid of another interior principle, we have no capacity to apprehend them, no disposition to entertain them, no strength to pursue them; they, as the Apostle saith, 'are foolishness to us,' that is, incongruous to our prejudicate notions, and insipid to our corrupt palates.

Such doctrines as these; that our felicity consisteth not in affluence of temporal enjoyments, but in dispositions of soul crossing our humors, curbing our appetites, and quelling our passions; in conformity of practice to rules distasteful to our sense; in the love and favor of an invisible Being; in reversion of an estate not to be possessed until after our death in another world; that none of these present things do well deserve our serious regard, affection, or care, and that it is blameable to be solicitous about them; that naked goodness (how low, weak, and poor soever) is to be chosen before all the specious pomps and glories of this world; that the secret testimony of conscience is to be preferred before all the approbation and applause of men; that the hope of future joy should oversway the desire of present most certain and sensible delights; that the loss of all things may sometime be deemed our greatest gain, being contemned our highest honor, enduring afflictions our most desirable condition, death our surest welfare, a cross preferable to a crown; that accordingly it is often advantageous and expedient for us, and a duty incumbent on us, willingly to discard our dearest contents of life, to sacrifice our nearest relations, to refuse what we most affect, to undertake what we most distaste, to undergo without reluctancy or regret the most bitter accidents that can befal us; that we must (to use the holy style) 'hate our own souls, deny ourselves, and take up our cross, quit houses and lands, desert kindred and friends;' ἀποτάσσεσθαι πᾶσι τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὑπάρχουσι· 'to renounce,' or bid farewell to, 'all that he hath,' or owneth, cut off our right hands, and pluck out our right eyes; circumcise our hearts, mortify our members; crucify our flesh, with its affections and lusts; be crucified to the world; to account all worldly things damage, dross, and dung, in comparison to spiritual goods:

that we must so far remit and restrain our self-love, as to love all men, not excluding our greatest enemies, as ourselves; so as not only to part freely with our particular accommodations, but on occasion, in imitation of our Saviour, to 'lay down our lives for them;' so as not only to comport with their infirmities, but to requite their extremest injuries with good-will and good turns; so as to do good to all men, to return no evil to any; 'to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them which despitefully use us, and persecute us.'

These and such like dictates of the Spirit are hard and harsh sayings, absurd to our natural conceit, and abominable to our carnal humor; we cannot readily swallow them, we cannot easily digest them; in respect to them we as mere men are ἐχθροὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ, 'enemies in our mind,' or reason; our discourse presently doth contradict and oppose them; our reason is shut up, and barred with various appetites, humors, and passions against such truths; nor can we admit them into our hearts, except God by his Spirit do 'set open our mind,' and work a free passage for them into us; it is 'he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,' who must, as St. Paul speaketh, 'illustrate our hearts with the knowlege' of these things: an 'unction from the holy One,' clearing our eyes, softening our hearts, healing our distempered faculties, must, as St. John informeth us, teach and persuade us this sort of truths: a hearty faith of these seemingly incredible propositions must indeed be, as St. Paul calleth it, 'the gift of God,' proceeding from that 'Spirit of faith,' whereof the same Apostle speaketh; such faith is not, as St. Basil saith, 'engendered by geometrical necessities, but by the effectual operations of the Holy Ghost: 'Flesh and blood will not reveal unto us, nor can any man' with clear confidence 'say, that Jesus (the author, master, and exemplifier of these doctrines) is the Lord, (the Messias, the infallible Prophet, the universal Lawgiver, the Son of the living God,) but by the Holy Ghost:' 'Every spirit, which sincerely confesseth him to be the Christ,' who hath enjoined these precepts, we may with St. John safely conclude to 'be of God;' for of ourselves 'we are not sufficient,' as the Apostle saith, λογίζεσθαί τι, 'to reason out,' or collect any of these things; we never of our own accord, without divine attraction, should

'come unto Christ,' that is, should effectually consent unto and embrace his institution, consisting of such unplausible propositions and precepts: hardly would his own Disciples, who had so long enjoyed the light of his instruction and conversation, have admitted it, if he had not granted to them that 'Spirit of truth,' whose work it was ὁδηγεῖν, to lead them in this unknown and uncouth way, ἀναγγέλλειν, to tell them again and again, that is, to instil and inculcate these crabbed truths on them, ὑπομιμνήσκειν, to admonish, excite, and urge them to the marking and minding them; hardly, I say, without the guidance of the Spirit, would our Lord's Disciples have admitted divers evangelical truths, as our Lord himself told them; 'I have,' said he, 'many things besi'e to say to you, but ye cannot as yet bear them: but when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he shall conduct you into all truth.'

As for the mighty sages of the world, the learned scribes, the subtle disputers, the deep politicians, the 'wise men according to the flesh,' the men of most refined judgment and improved reason in the world's eye, they were more ready to deride, than to regard, to impugn, than to admit these doctrines: to the 'Greeks who sought wisdom,' the preaching of them did seem foolishness.

It is true, some few sparks or flashes of this divine knowlege may possibly be driven out by rational consideration; philosophy may yield some twilight glimmerings thereof; common reason may dictate a faint consent unto, may produce a cold tendency after some of these things: but a clear perception, and a resolute persuasion of mind, that 'full assurance of faith,' and 'inflexible confession of hope,' which the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh of; that 'all riches of the full assurance of understanding,' that 'abundant knowlege of the divine will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,' with which St. Paul did pray that his Colossians might 'be replenished;' these so perfect illustrations of the mind, so powerful convictions of the heart, do argue immediate influences from the fountain of life and wisdom, the divine Spirit. No external instruction could infuse, no interior discourse could excite them, could penetrate those opacities of ignorance, and dissipate those thick mists of prejudice, wherein nature and custom do involve us; could so

thoroughly awaken the lethargic stupidity of our souls; could supple the refractory stiffness of our wills, could mollify the stony hardness of our hearts, could void our natural aversation to such things, and quell that φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, 'that carnal mind,' the which, St. Paul saith, 'is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' could depress those ὑψώματα, those lofty towers of self-conceit, reared against the knowlege of God, and demolish those ὀχυρώματα, those bulwarks of self-will and perverse stomach opposed against the impressions of divine truth; and captivate πᾶν νόημα, every conceit and device of ours to the obedience of Christ and his discipline. Well therefore did St. Paul pray in behalf of his Ephesians, that 'God would bestow on them that spirit of wisdom and revelation in the acknowlegement of him, and that the eyes of their mind (or reason) might be enlightened, so as to know the hope of their calling;' that is, to understand and believe the doctrines of Christianity, which on condition of obedience did promise felicity to them.

So is the light of spiritual knowlege, together with a temper of mind disposed to receive it, communicated to us; but farther also by the same divine power and spirit are our vital heat and vigor, our active strength and courage imparted. For as mere men, we are not only blind to discern, dull to conceive, backward to undertake the necessary duties of virtue and piety; but we are also dead, heartless, and unwieldy, lame and impotent, indisposed and uncapable to perform them: though we should competently apprehend our duty, and our spirit thence should be willing; yet our flesh, or natural power, is weak: we may, as St. Paul instructeth us, in our judgment consent that 'the law is holy, just, and good;' and consequently 'to will may be present to us;' that is, we may be desirous, and in some measure resolved to obey it; yea, we may 'have some interior rational complacence therein,' and yet not have ability to act according to these dictates and desires; for 'to will is present with me,' (saith he in the person of a man endued only with natural strength, abstracting from the subsidiary virtue and operation of the divine Spirit,) 'but to perform that which is good, I find not;' I perceive not any means or way of effecting it: knowlege therefore, and willingness to

do good, doth not suffice; we need a prevalent force to stir and raise this unwieldy bulk, to overpoise our natural propensions, to subdue the reluctances, and check the importunities of sense, to correct bad nature, and reclaim from bad custom: the natural might and policy of our single reason, being very feeble and shallow, is not fitly matched to encounter that potent confederacy of enemies, which continually with open violence doth invade and assail us; or which by clandestine wiles doth watch to circumvent and supplant us. Is it easy for us not to dread the frowns, nor to be charmed by the flatteries; to slight both the hatred and favor; to abide the persecutions, and to avoid the allurements of this world; this wicked, violent, deceitful world, which is ever ready to deter from good, and entice us to evil? Is it easy to restrain and repress those 'fleshly lusts, which,' as St. Peter saith, 'do war against our souls,' combating them with their own forces, using their own faculties and members as weapons against them? Is it easy to rescue ourselves from that 'other law in our members, that warreth against the law of our understanding, and captivateth us to the law of sin?' Is it a small matter to set on, to grapple with, to knock down that gigantic Philistine, inordinate self-love, (the root of injustice, pride, envy, malice, ambition, and avarice within us,) which naturally is so tall and stout; which, if not checked in its progress, will daily grow in stature and strength? Is it a slight business to detect, to counterplot, to decline or defeat those *μεθοδείαι*, those devices, or subtile trains, and sleights of the tempter; 'to wrestle with principalities, with powers, with the rulers of this darksome world, with the spiritualities of wickedness' surrounding us? May we not reasonably in comparison to these mighty Anakim be (as the children of Israel anciently were) 'in our own sight as grasshoppers,' quite despairing by our own strength to vanquish, to resist them?

In our spiritual conflict with such dangerous and dreadful adversaries, we do need an *ἐπιχορηγία τοῦ πνεύματος*, as St. Paul speaketh, that is, 'a large supply of the Spirit,' a collation of auxiliary forces, an habitual support derived from that invincible and infallible Spirit, which only is stronger and wiser than they; we need to be armed with that *δύναμις ἐξ*

ὕψους, that 'power from on high,' or heavenly might, whereby the Apostles were enabled to fight their noble battles, and to achieve their glorious conquests, subduing the rebellious world, and baffling the powers of darkness; we need δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι, 'to be strengthened with might by Christ's Spirit in the inward man,' as St. Paul expresseth it; whereby, as he, we may πάντα ἰσχύειν, be 'able to do all things,' or to accomplish the most difficult parts of our duty; without which 'we can do nothing,' that is, cannot discharge the most easy things required of us; 'all our sufficiency is of God;' it is he, who 'out of his goodness doth effect in us both to will and to perform;' his Spirit 'taking part with our infirmities,' and thereby giving us advantage over all opposition and difficulty. The chief reason why we do not sin, or persist in a course of disobedience to the laws of God, is, as St. John telleth us, 'because the divine seed abideth in us,' that root of divine life, and vital activity implanted in us by the Holy Spirit; that divine nature, (as St. Peter styleth it,) that principle and spring of spiritual motion by him inserted in us; from which only seed or nature do sprout all heavenly graces and virtues.

The principal and original virtue, charity, (the root, the fountain, the mother of all goodness, as St. Chrysostom calleth it,) even that 'is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us,' as St. Paul telleth us; and the 'fruit,' saith he, 'of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth;' and, love, peace, longsuffering, benignity, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, are by the same divine Apostle reckoned streams from the same source, fruits of the same rich and goodly stock: to it generally are attributed all purification of our hearts, mortification of our lusts, sanctification of our lives, and consequently salvation of our souls: 'Ye,' saith St. Paul, 'are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;' and, 'God hath chosen us from the beginning to salvation by sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;' and, 'Having,' saith St. Peter, 'purified our souls in obedience to the truth, by the Spirit, unto charity unfeigned;' and, 'If,' saith St. Paul again, 'by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live;' thus doth our spiritual being and state, together

with our life and active powers, depend on the Holy Spirit: and not only so; but,

3. The continued subsistence and preservation, the actual use and exercise of them, all our discreet conduct, all our good practice do rely on him: it is true of our spiritual, no less than of our natural life. 'If he doth avert his face, we are troubled; if he doth subtract his influence, we die, and return unto our dust:' on all occasions we do need his direction, aid, and comfort; for 'the way of man,' as the prophet saith, 'is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps:' 'it is the Lord,' as the psalmist saith, 'that ordereth the steps of a good man, and upholdeth him with his hand.' We have all need to pray with that good man; 'Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.'

We are vain and uncertain in our opinions, fickle and irresolute in our purposes, slow and heavy in our proceedings; apt to faint and falter, to stumble and slip in all our practice; we do need therefore this sure oracle to consult in our doubts and darknesses; this faithful friend to direct and advise us in our affairs; this constant monitor to rouse and quicken us in our undertakings; this powerful guardian to support and establish us in our ways: it is, in respect to good men, this steady hand that holdeth the helm, and gently steereth their course through the blind tracks of religious practice; withdrawing them from those dangerous shelves of error and temptation, on which they are apt to split; it is this heavenly gale that filleth their sails with constant resolution, and fairly driveth them forward in their voyage toward eternal bliss. He softly doth whisper and insinuate good thoughts into us; doth kindle pious desires, doth cherish virtuous intentions, doth promote honest endeavors; he seasonably checketh and restraineth us from sin; he faithfully reproveth and upbraideth us for committing it; he raiseth wholesome remorse, shame, and displeasure for our unworthiness and folly; he sweetly warmeth our cold affections, inflaming our hearts with devotion toward God; he qualifieth us, and encourageth us to approach the throne of grace, breeding in us faith and humble confidence, prompting us fit matter

of request, becoming our advocate and intercessor for the good success of our prayers; 'through Christ Jesus,' saith St. Paul, 'we have access by one Spirit unto the Father;' and, 'the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should ask for as we ought; but the Spirit itself intercedeth for us.'

He guardeth us, he standeth by us, he sustaineth us in all trials and temptations, affording grace sufficient to escape or to endure them; 'not suffering us to be tempted above what we are able.'

He supporteth and comforteth us in our afflictions and distresses of all kinds, of our inward and outward estate: this David knew when in his penitential agonies he prayed, 'Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit:' this those first Christians felt, who, under persecutions and all outward discouragements, were yet 'filled with joy,' and 'did walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;' whence that testimony of St. Paul concerning the Thessalonians; 'Ye were followers of me, and of the Lord, receiving the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:' by it the blessed saints, martyrs, and confessors being inspired, did not only with admirable patience, but incredible alacrity undergo the extremest losses, ignominies, and tortures, which the spite of hell and rage of the world could inflict on them.

It is, in fine, this Holy Spirit which is the sole author and spring of all true delight, of all real content within us; of that unspeakable joy in believing, that gaiety of hope, that satisfaction in well doing: the partaking of his society, influence, and consolation, is indeed the most delicious repast and richest cordial of our soul; the nearest resemblance, the sweetest foretaste of Paradise.

So many, so great; yea far more, far greater than, should the time give me leave, I could enumerate or express, are the benefits accruing to us from this most excellent gift of God, by him graciously conferred on all good Christians; for which we should correspondently endeavor with all our hearts to praise and thank him; in all our lives to make grateful and worthy

returns for it; especially by well using it to the greatest purposes, for which it was bestowed, of enabling us to serve God, of preserving us from sin, of conducting us to eternal salvation.

Let us earnestly invite this holy guest unto us, by our prayers unto him, who hath promised to bestow his Spirit on those which ask it, to impart this living stream to every one which thirsteth after it; let us willingly receive him into our hearts, let us treat him with all kind usage, with all humble observance. Let us not exclude him by supine neglect, or rude resistance; let us not grieve him by our perverse and froward behavior toward him; let us not tempt him by our fond presumptions, or base treacheries: let us not quench his heavenly light and heat by our foul lusts and passions: but let us admit gladly his gentle illapses; let us hearken to his faithful suggestions; let us comply with his kindly motions; let us demean ourselves modestly, consistently, and officiously toward him: that we may so do, God of his infinite mercy grant unto us, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with the same Holy Spirit, for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

'O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping of thy commandments we may please thee both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF A DEFENCE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

COLOSSIANS, CHAP. III.—VERSE 2.

FOR understanding this apostolical precept, two particulars must be considered; first, the act, *to set our affections;* then the object, *things above.*

Signification of the word φρονεῖν primarily, is to denote an advertency, or intent application of the mind to any subject, so as to include the will, affection, and activity, whence it may imply direction of our understanding to know, of our will to choose, of our affection to love, and of our activity to pursue any good which is proposed, &c.

The τὰ ἄνω may be so taken, as to import all things relating to our spiritual life here, or to our future state hereafter; the which do actually subsist above in heaven, or have a final reference thither, &c.

Of these things the principal and supreme is the most glorious and blessed Trinity; the subject of this day's commemoration.

The sacred Trinity may be considered, either as it is in itself wrapt up in unexplicable folds of mystery; or as it hath discovered itself operating in wonderful methods of grace towards us.

As it is in itself, it is an object too bright and dazzling for our weak eye to fasten on; an abyss too deep for human reason: we are so bound to mind it, as to exercise our faith and express our humility: this enlarged on. To repress the

presumption of some, and restrain the curiosity of others, it may be observed,

1. That our reason is no competent or capable judge concerning propositions of this nature: this shown: this testified also by the holy Scripture: quotations given.

2. We may consider that not only the imperfection of our reason itself, but the manner of using it, incapacitates us from judging about these matters: for we cannot effectually discourse or determine about any subject, without having principles homogeneous and pertinent thereto: it is shown that we have no such principles.

3. We may consider the weakness and shortness of our reason, even about things most familiar to us; the little or nothing we by our utmost diligence can know concerning their intrinsic essences, their properties, their causes, and the ways of their production: this topic enlarged on.

4. We daily see and observe things, which, did not manifest experience convince us of their being, we should be apt to disbelieve their possibility: sense, no less than faith, presents us with objects, to bare reason improbable and unconceivable: instances adduced.

5. The propositions clearly delivered unto us by God himself, are on many accounts more unquestionably true, are more credible than the experiments of any sense, or principles of any science: whence, if any contest arise between them, precedence is due to the former: this head enlarged on and illustrated.

6. But farther, not only the consideration of this mystery, but that of all the divine attributes, will in like manner extort from our feeble reason the question of Nicodemus, *How can these things be?* They will all equally puzzle our shallow imagination, and baffle our slender understanding: instances adduced.

7. Lastly, we may consider and meditate on the total incom-

prehensibility of God in all things belonging to him; in his nature, his attributes, his decrees, his works and ways; which all are full of depth, mystery, and wonder. God *inhabiteth a light inaccessible* to the weak sight of mortal eyes.

These considerations may suffice in some manner to show that St. Chrysostom had reason to exclaim against the madness of those, who *are busily curious in speculation about the essence of God:* farther observations on this topic; &c.

Some practical considerations on the subject offered.

We should carefully study, and be duly affected with that gracious consent of the glorious Three in designing and prosecuting our good: this point enlarged on. More distinctly,

1. We should set our mind on God the Father, before the foundation of the world pleasing to forecast with himself the creation of us, and the communication of his own image to us, endowing us with such excellent faculties, and permitting us to fall, that he might raise us to a higher condition: this head enlarged on.

2. We should contemplate the blessed Son of God, concurring with his Father in all purposes of love and mercy towards us; but especially in his work of redemption; &c.

3. We should also meditate on the blessed Spirit of God, with equal goodness conspiring and co-operating with all the purposes, to all the effects of grace; more especially as the repairer of our decayed frames, the enlivener of our dead souls, the imparter of spiritual strength to our feeble powers, &c.: this topic enlarged on. Concluding exhortations.

A DEFENCE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

TRINITY SUNDAY, 1663.

COLOSSIANS, CHAP. III.—VERSE 2.

Set your affections on things above.

For understanding this apostolical precept, two particulars must be considered; first the act, φρονεῖν, (which is rendered to 'set our affections;') then the object, τὰ ἄνω, 'things above:' these we briefly shall explain.

The word φρονεῖν doth primarily, and also according to common use, denote an advertency, or intent application of the mind on any object: of the mind, that is, of a man's soul, especially of its rational part; so as to include the powers of understanding, will, affection, activity; whence it may imply direction of our understanding to know; of our will to choose and embrace; of our affection to love, desire, relish; of our activity to pursue any good (real or apparent) which is proposed: according to which most comprehensive sense (suiting the nature of the thing) I do take the word, supposing that St. Paul doth enjoin us to employ all our mental faculties in study, choice, passion, endeavor on supernal things.

The τὰ ἄνω (things above) may be so taken, as to import all things relating to our spiritual life here, or our future state hereafter; the which do either actually subsist above in heaven, or have a final reference thither: so they may comprise, 1. The substantial beings, to whom we stand related, owe

respect, perform duty. 2. The state and condition of our spiritual life here or hereafter, as we are servants and subjects of God, citizens of heaven, candidates of immortal happiness. 3. Rules to be observed, qualities to be acquired, actions to be performed, means to be used by us in regard to the superior place and state.

Of these things the incomparably principal and supreme, the τὸ ὑπεράνω, is the ever most glorious and blessed Trinity; to the minding of which this day is peculiarly dedicated, and the which indeed is always the most excellent, most beneficial, most comfortable object of our contemplation and affection; wherefore on it I shall now immediately fix my discourse.

The sacred Trinity may be considered, either as it is in itself wrapt up in unexplicable folds of mystery; or as it hath discovered itself operating in wonderful methods of grace towards us.

As it is in itself, it is an object too bright and dazzling for our weak eye to fasten on, an abyss too deep for our short reason to fathom: I can only say, that we are so bound to mind it, as to exercise our faith, and express our humility, in willingly believing, in submissively adoring those high mysteries which are revealed in the holy oracles concerning it, by that Spirit itself, 'which searcheth the depths of God,' and by that only Son of God, who, residing in his Father's bosom, hath thence brought them forth, and expounded them to us, so far as was fit for our capacity and use: and the lectures so read by the eternal wisdom of God, the propositions uttered by the mouth of truth itself, we are obliged with a docile ear, and a credulous heart, to entertain.

That there is one Divine Nature or Essence, common unto three Persons incomprehensibly united, and ineffably distinguished; united in essential attributes, distinguished by peculiar idioms and relations; all equally infinite in every divine perfection, each different from other in order and manner of subsistence; that there is a mutual inexistence of one in all, and all in one; a communication without any deprivation or diminution in the communicant; an eternal generation, and an eternal procession, without precedence or succession, without proper causality or dependence; a Father imparting his own,

and the Son receiving his Father's life, and a Spirit issuing from both, without any division or multiplication of essence: these are notions which may well puzzle our reason in conceiving how they agree, but should not stagger our faith in assenting that they are true; on which we should meditate, not with hope to comprehend, but with disposition to admire, veiling our faces in the presence, and prostrating our reason at the feet of wisdom so far transcending us.

There be those, who, because they cannot untie, dare to cut in sunder these sacred knots; who, because they cannot fully conceive it, dare flatly to deny them; who, instead of confessing their own infirmity, do charge the plain doctrines and assertions of holy Scripture with impossibility. Others seem to think they can demonstrate these mysteries by arguments grounded on principles of natural light, and express it by similitudes derived from common experience. To repress the presumption of the former, and to restrain the curiosity of the latter, the following considerations (improved by your thoughts) may perhaps somewhat conduce.

1. We may consider that our reason is no competent or capable judge concerning propositions of this nature: 'Our breast,' as Minutius speaketh, 'is a narrow vessel, that will not hold much understanding;' it is not sufficient, nor was ever designed to sound such depths, to descry the radical principles of all being, to reach the extreme possibilities of things. Such an intellectual capacity is vouchsafed to us as doth suit to our degree, (the lowest rank of intelligent creatures,) as becometh our station in this inferior part of the world, as may qualify us to discharge the petty businesses committed to our management, and the facile duties incumbent on us: but to know what God is, how he subsisteth, what he can, what he should do, by our natural perspicacity, or by any means we can use, farther than he pleaseth to reveal, doth not suit to the meanness of our condition, or the narrowness of our capacity; these really are the most elevated sublimities, and the abstrusest subtilties that are, or can be, in the nature of things: he that can penetrate them, may erect his tribunal any where in the world, and pretend justly that nothing in heaven or earth is exempted from his judgment. But in truth, how unfit our

reason is to exercise such universal jurisdiction, we may discern by comparing it to our sense; it is obvious that many beasts do (by advantage of a finer sense) see, hear, smell things imperceptible to us: and were it not very unreasonable to conclude that such things do not exist, or are in themselves altogether insensible, because they do not at all appear to us? Is it not evident that we ought to impute their imperceptibility (respecting us) to the defect of our sense, to its dullness and grossness, in regard to the subtilty of those objects? Even so may propositions in themselves, and in regard to the capacity of higher understandings (for there are gradual differences in understanding as well as in sense) be true and very intelligible, which to our inferior reason seem unintelligible, or repugnant to the prenotions with which our soul is imbued; and our not discerning those truths may argue the blindness and weakness of our understanding, not any fault or inconsistency in the things themselves; nor should it cause us anywise to distrust them, if they come recommended to our belief by competent authority.

To such purposes indeed the holy Scripture frequently doth vilify our reason and knowlege: 'Every man,' saith Jeremiah, 'is brutish in knowlege.' 'The Lord,' saith the psalmist, 'knoweth the thoughts of men, ('of wise men,' as St. Paul quoteth it,) that they are vanity.' 'Vain man,' saith he in Job, 'would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt;' that is, however we affect to seem wise, yet to be dull as an ass, to be wild as a colt, is natural to us. 'My thoughts,' saith God in the prophet, 'are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' God's wisdom is as the heavens, the highest and top of all wisdom; man's as the earth, beneath which there is no degree, but that of hell and darkness: we therefore in this respect are unfit to determine concerning things so exceedingly sublime and subtile.

2. We may consider that not only the imperfection of our reason itself, but the manner of using it, doth incapacitate us to judge about these matters. Had we competent skill to sail in this deep ocean, yet we do want a gale to drive us, and a com-

pass to steer our course by therein; we have not any firm grounds to build our judgment on, or certain rules to square it by. We cannot effectually discourse or determine on any subject, without having principles homogeneous and pertinent thereto (that are ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ συγγενείᾳ, cognate and congruous to the subject-matter, as the philosopher speaketh) on which to found our argumentation. Now all the principles we can have are either originally innate to our minds, or afterward immediately infused by God, or by external instruction from him disclosed to us; or acquired by our experience, and observation of things incurring our sense; or framed by our reason, comparing those means; of which the three former sorts are most arbitrarily communicated, and both for number and kind depend on the free pleasure of him, who distributeth them according to a measure suitable to each man's occasions, estimated by himself. How many those are, and how far they may qualify us to judge or discourse about those transcendent matters, is hard to define; but most certainly they never can clash with one another; no light in any manner imparted by God can obscure the doctrine declared by him, no doctrine can thwart principles instilled by him. The latter sorts appertain only to material and sensible objects; which therefore can only enable us to deduce, or to examine conclusions relating to them; and being applied to things of another kind, are abused, so as to become apt to produce great mistakes: as for instance, most ancient philosophers observing that the changes and vicissitudes in nature were generally by the same matters undergoing several alterations, or putting on different shapes; and that bodies once being in rest, did usually consist in that state, until by impulse of other bodies they were put into motion, did thence frame such axioms, or principles of discourse, *Ex nihilo nihil fit;* and *Quicquid movetur, ab alio movetur:* which propositions supposing them true in relation to the present conditions and powers of sensible things, yet were it unlawful to stretch them unto beings of another kind and nature, (to beings immaterial and insensible,) or to infer thence generally, that in the utmost possibility of things there is not any creative, or any self-motive power: even as from the like premises it would be vain to conclude that there be no other beings subsistent

beside those which strike our senses, or discover themselves by sensible effects. In like manner, it cannot be reasonable out of principles drawn from ordinary experience, about these most low and imperfect things, to collect that there can be no other kind of unions, of distinctions, of generations, of processions, than such as our own gross sense doth represent to us: reason itself more forcibly doth oblige us to think that to sublimer beings there do pertain modes of existence and action, unions and distinctions, influences and emanations of a more high and perfect kind, such as our coarse apprehension cannot adequate, nor our rude language express; which we, perhaps, have no faculty subtile enough to conceive distinctly, nor can attain any congruous principles, from which to discourse solidly about them. To judge of these things, if we will not, against the philosopher's rule, *μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἄλλο γένος*, shift kinds, or use improper and impertinent arguments, we must 'compare spiritual things with spiritual,' so as to draw conclusions about spirituals only from principles revealed by God's Spirit, the sole master of spiritual science; so also as to express them not *ἐν διδακτοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις*, 'in terms devised by human wisdom,' but in such as the Holy Spirit hath suggested; for *ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος*, a man endowed merely with common sense (or natural reason) cannot *δέχεσθαι*, apprehend, or perceive those things of God, which only the Spirit of God doth know. To improve and press which consideration farther,

3. We may consider the weakness and shortness of our reason, even about things most familiar and easy to us; the little or nothing we by our utmost diligence can attain to know, concerning their intrinsic essences, their properties, their causes, and manners of production. What do we more commonly hear than earnest complaints from the most industrious searchers of natural knowlege concerning the great obscurity of nature, the difficulty of finding truth, the blindness of our mind, and impotency of our reason? And should they be silent, yet experience plainly would speak how difficult, if not impossible, it is to arrive unto any clear and sure knowlege of these common objects; seeing the most sedulous inquiries, undertaken by the choicest wits for above two thousand years, have scarce perhaps exhibited one unquestionable theorem in natural philo-

sophy, one unexceptionable maxim of ethical prudence or policy; all things being still exposed to doubt and dispute, as they were of old, when first admiration and curiosity did prompt men to hunt after the causes of things: the most however that, after all our care and toil, we can perceive, doth not exceed some faint colors, some superficial figures, some gross effects of things, while their radical properties and their immediate causes remain enveloped and debarred from our sight in unaccessible darkness. Shall we then, who cannot pierce into the nature of a pebble, that cannot apprehend how a mushroom doth grow, that are baffled in our philosophy about a gnat, or a worm, debate and decide (beyond what is taught us from above) concerning the precise manner of divine essence, subsistence, or generation? 'I do,' saith St. Chrysostom, 'eat meats; but how they are divided into phlegm, into blood, into juice, into choler, I am ignorant; these things, which every day we see and taste, we do not know: and are we curious about the essence of God?' 'We are (as Aristotle himself, no dunce, no idiot, doth confess) but owl-eyed, *πρὸς τὰ τῇ φύσει φανερώτατα πάντων*, in regard to things naturally most evident,' and palpable; and can we be such Lynceus's, as to see through the farthest recesses of infinity? 'Hardly,' saith the wisdom of Solomon, 'do we guess aright of things on the earth, and with labor do we find the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out?' Yea, and the genuine Solomon himself, 'I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me: that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?' What is more remote, what more profound, than God's nature? who then can find it out? Sooner with our hands may we touch the extreme surface of the skies, sooner with our eyes may we pierce to the centre of the earth: so it is expressly told to us in Job; 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?'

4. It may be considered that we daily see and observe things, which, did not manifest experience convince us of their being, we should be apt to disbelieve their possibility; sense no less than faith doth present us with objects, to bare reason

improbable and unconceivable; so that should we attend to the scruples injected thereby, we should hardly take things for possible, which we behold existent; we should distrust the greatest evidence of sense, and by our logic put out our eyes. Who would believe that, did he not every day see it; who can conceive how, although he seeth it, from a little dry, ill-favored, insipid seed thrown into the earth, there shortly would rise so goodly a plant, endued with so exact figure, so fragrant smell, so delicate taste, so lively color; by what engines it attracteth, by what discretion it culleth out, by what hands it mouldeth its proper aliment; by what artifice it doth elaborate the same so curiously, and incorporate it with itself? What virtue could we imagine in nature able to digest an earthy juice into the pellucid clearness of crystal, into the invincible firmness of a diamond? Who would not be an infidel, did not his sight assure him of the miracles achieved by that blind plastic force, which without eye or hand doth frame such varieties of exquisite workmanship, inimitable, and far surpassing the skill of the greatest artist? That a little star, from so vast a distance, in a moment, should make impression on our eyes, replenishing with its light or image so spacious a region all about it, were we blind we should hardly believe, we scarce could fancy: how, without knowing the organs of speech, or the manner of applying them, without any care or pain employed by us, we so conform our voice, as to express what word, what accent we please; how we do this, or that we can do it, as it will confound our thought to imagine, so it would stagger our faith to believe, did not our conscience persuade us that we can and do speak. It is on occasion very commonly said, I should never have believed it, had I not seen it; and that men speak so in earnest, many such instances declare. Now if we can give credit to our sense against the suffrage or scruple of our reason in things not so discosted from our capacity of knowlege, shall we not much more yield our belief unto God's express word in things so infinitely distant from it? If common experience can subdue our judgments, and compel us to a belief of things incredible, shall our reason demur at submitting to divine authority? If the dictate of our conscience doth convince us, shall not we much more sur-

render to the testimony of God, who 'is greater than our conscience, and knoweth all things?' If we do believe, because we seem to know by seeing ourselves; we should rather believe because we surely know by hearing from God: for sense may deceive us, and often needeth correction from reason; God cannot deceive, and reason often is by him corrected: which leadeth me to a farther consideration, that,

5. The propositions clearly delivered unto us by God himself, are on many accounts more unquestionably true, more credible than the experiments of any sense, or principles of any science: whence if there happen to arise any seeming contest between these, a precedence is due to the former, in derogation to the latter; it is fit that we rather give our eyes and our ears, our fancies and our reasons the lie, than anywise, by diffidence to his word, put an affront on God, (for to disbelieve him is, as St. John telleth us, to give him the lie;) τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'the folly of God' (as St. Paul speaketh; that is, the points of faith declared by God, which seem most irrational and cross to the decrees of human wisdom) is σοφώτερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 'wiser than men;' that is, more assuredly consonant to real truth, than our most undoubted theorems of science, and most current maxims of policy. 'God is the Father of all lights,' both of that which immediately shineth from heaven, and of that which glimmereth here below; he is the fountain of all truth, whether natural or supernatural: but his light and his truth he conveyeth into us by manners different; some light streameth directly from him, other cometh obliquely, being refracted through divers mediums, or reflected from several objects on us; the first sort must needs be more bright and more pure, should be more powerful and efficacious on our minds: the latter is often blended with material tinctures, is weakened by the interruptions it meeteth with, loseth of its purity and its force by the many conduits it passeth through, by the many shades it mixeth with. Observations of sense do often prove fallacious; and their not ever doing so, dependeth on divers conditions, a right temper of the organ, a fit disposition of the medium, a just distance of the object; so that conclusions derived from them cannot be so absolutely certain, nor consequently the principles grounded on them. But divine revelation is not obnoxious to such conditions: as the doctrines re-

vealed are in themselves simply true, according to the highest pitch of necessity, because supreme wisdom doth conceive them, and truth itself doth vent them; so the manner of declaring them must be competent, because God himself doth choose and use it; there plainly needeth no more than yielding an attentive ear, and skill in the language wherein they are expressed, to secure us from error and uncertainty about them; so that well might St. Austin say, that 'in other things our conjecture is exercised; but faith alone doth assure our mind.'

There have been those, you know, who have not only advanced doubts concerning propositions attested to by clearest sense, and inferred by strongest discourse; but have by their argute cavillations bid fair to shake the foundations of all human science: but I never heard of any, who believed a God to be, that did contest the infallible truth of his oracles: Socrates, we may be sure, (his excellent scholar assuring us,) who was so incredulous as to disclaim all pretence to wisdom or science, being author of the famous saying, *Hoc tantum scio;* yet greatly did rely on divine significations and testimonies, so deemed by him, and such as he could come at; alleging that he, who followeth the conduct of his own reason, instead of God's direction, chooseth a blind and ignorant guide, before one that best seeth, and knoweth the way: 'He,' saith the historian, 'despised all human conceits in respect of God's advice.'

'He that formeth the eye,' saith the psalmist, 'shall not he see? He that planteth the ear, shall not he hear? He that teacheth man knowlege, shall not he know?' He that endued us with all our knowing faculties, and presideth over us in the management of them, shall not he supereminently know all that we can? Must not they in reason continue subordinate to his direction? Should they not always discern and judge under correction by him, with an appeal and submission reserved to his better judgment?

I might adjoin that the object and the end (as well as the author and the manner) of divine revelation doth argue it to surpass all reason, and all sense, in certainty and credibility; for sense and reason converse wholly, or chiefly, about objects

material and mutable; revelation about immaterial and immutable things: they direct us in affairs concerning this transitory life; this leadeth us toward eternal felicity. To mistake about those objects, to miscarry in those affairs, is in itself of little, in comparison of no importance: but to judge rightly about these things, to tread safely in these paths, is of infinitely vast concernment; a smaller competency therefore of light and certainty might well suffice to the purposes of reason and sense; but to faith the greatest degree of assurance is worthily due, and seemeth requisite. But farther,

6. Not only the consideration of this mystery, but of all the divine attributes, will in like manner extort from our feeble reason the question of Nicodemus, 'How can these things be?' They will all of them equally puzzle our shallow imagination, and baffle our slender understanding: for who can imagine, or understand, how God's immensity doth consist with his perfect simplicity; or that without any parts he doth coexist to all possible extension of matter; being all here, and wholly there, and immensely every where? Who can apprehend his indivisible eternity, or how all successions of time are ever present to him, and subject to his view; so that he is not older now than he was when the world began, nor younger than he will be after innumerable ages are past; so that he foreseeth the most contingent events, depending on causes in their nature arbitrary and indeterminate? Who can fancy, how out of mere nothing, or out of extreme confusion and indisposedness, the world could be created, and framed into so goodly order, by a mere act of will, or by the bare speaking of a word? How without any distraction of thought he governeth affairs, attending to the infinite varieties of thoughts, words, and actions occurring here; and *ita curans universos tanquam singulos, ita singulos tanquam solos*, as St. Austin speaketh?* How he is truly said to resolve and to reverse, to love and hate, to be pleased and grieved, all without any real change, or shadow of alteration? How he suffereth many things to happen, which extremely displease him, and which he can easily hinder; and doth not effect many things which are much desired by him,

* Confess. iii. 11.

and very feasible to his power? Why to equal men he distributeth his gifts so unequally; affording to divers abundant means of becoming happy, leaving others destitute of them? What wit of man can reconcile his infinite benignity with his most severe decrees; or compose the seeming differences between his mercy and his justice? Many such perfections and dispensations of God we must steadfastly believe, because they are plainly taught in Scripture; to distrust them being to renounce Christianity; to deny them being to rase up the very foundations of our religion: yet he that shall with his utmost attention of mind endeavor to conceive how they can be, or how they consist together, according to our ordinary notions of things, and the vulgar meaning of words, applied by us to these inferior matters, shall find himself gravelled with innumerable semblances of contradiction, plunged in depths inscrutable, involved in labyrinths inextricable.

What in practice the cross of Christ was, 'a scandal to Jews,' (men dull, but obstinate, and invincibly possessed by vain prejudices,) and 'folly to Greeks,' (men of wit and subtilty, but overweeningly conceited of them,) that in speculation may a great part of divine truths be, apt to stumble froward and arrogant men; but as there, so here, 'blessed are they who are not scandalised;' whom no fond scruple or haughty conceit can pervert from readily embracing all necessary verities; such are those we pointed at, which if without extreme folly and impiety we cannot reject, or be diffident of, although surmounting our conceit, and dazzling our reason; then on the same account, with like facility, we must submit our faith to the doctrines concerning the blessed Trinity standing on the same authority.

7. Lastly, we may consider and meditate on the total incomprehensibility of God in all things belonging to him; in his nature, his attributes, his decrees, his works and ways; which all are full of depth, mystery, and wonder. God inhabiteth *φῶς ἀπρόσιτον*, a light inaccessible to the dim and weak sight of mortal eyes; which 'no man hath seen, nor can see:' 'No man,' as he told his servant Moses, 'can see his face (the very exterior appearance of him) and live:' he is 'a consuming fire,' that will scorch and devour such as by rash inquiries approach too near him; 'the sight,' it is said, 'of the glory of the Lord

was like devouring fire in the sight of the children of Israel.' Even those spiritual eagles, the quick and strong sighted Seraphims, are obliged to cover their faces, as not daring to look on, nor able to sustain the fulgor of his immediate presence, the flashes of glory and majesty issuing from his throne: and the most illuminate secretaries of heaven, unto whom secrets were disclosed, into which 'angels themselves were ambitious to pry,' were sometimes nonplused in contemplation of God's attributes and actions; being in their astonishment forced to cry out, Ὦ βάθος· 'O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowlege of God!' Even his methods of exterior providence are inscrutably mysterious; his judgments are ἀνεξερεύνητα, like inexhaustible mines, to the bottom whereof we cannot anywise dig by our inquiry; his paths are ἀνεξιχνίαστοι, so obscure as not to be traced by any footsteps of our discourse; his gifts are ἀνεκδιήγητοι, not to be interpreted, or expressed by our language. And if all concerning God be thus incomprehensible, why should any thing seem incredible? Why out of so many unconceivable mysteries do we choose some, reprobate others? Wherefore do we stretch our judgment beyond its limits to things so infinitely exceeding it? Why do we suffer our reason to be pragmatical, unjustly invading the office not belonging thereto; 'intruding into things which it hath not seen,' nor can comprehend; those 'secret things which belong to the Lord our God,' and the comprehension whereof he hath reserved unto himself?

These considerations may suffice in some manner to show that St. Chrysostom* had reason to exclaim so much against the madness, as he styleth it, of those who do πολυπραγμονεῖν τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'are busily curious in speculation about the essence of God;' daring, τοῖς οἰκείοις ὑποβάλλειν λογισμοῖς, 'to subject divine mysteries to their own ratiocinations:' that St. Basil's advice was wholesome, μὴ περιεργάζεσθαι τὰ σιωπώμενα, 'not to be meddlesome about things, about which holy Scripture is silent:' that another ancient writer did say no less truly than prettily, that in these matters *Curiositas reum facit, non peritum;* we may easilier incur blame than attain skill by nice

* Chrys. περὶ ἀκαταλ. α.

inquiry into them · that many of the Fathers do with great wisdom dislike and dissuade the searching τὸ πῶς, the manner of things being true, or possible, as a suspicious mark, or a dangerous motive of infidelity: that St. Paul's rules, φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, 'to be wise so as withal to be sober,' and modest; and μὴ φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ ὃ γέγραπται, 'not to conceit any thing without warrant of Scripture,' are in this case most especially to be heeded: that, according to St. Peter's admonition, we should 'as new-born babes (unprepossessed with any notions or fancies of our own) long for, and greedily suck in the sincere milk of the word;' not diluting it with baser liquors of human device: that where God doth interpose his definitive sentence, our reason hath nothing to do but to attend and submit; no right to vote, no licence to debate the matter; its duty is to listen and approve whatever God speaketh, to read and subscribe to whatever he writeth; at least in any case it should be mute, or ready to follow Job, saying, 'Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand on my mouth.' In fine, the testimony of God, with a sufficient clearness represented to the capacity of an honest and docile mind, (void of all partial respects, and clear from all sorts of prejudice; loving truth, and forward to entertain it; abhorring to wrest or wrack things, to use any fraud or violence on any principle or ground of truth;) the testimony of God, I say, so revealed, whatever exception our shallow reason can thrust in, should absolutely convince our judgments, and constrain our faith. If the holy Scripture teacheth us plainly, and frequently doth inculcate on us, (that which also the uniform course of nature and the peaceable government of the world doth also speak,) that there is but one true God; if it as manifestly doth ascribe to the three Persons of the blessed Trinity the same august names, the same peculiar characters, the same divine attributes, (essential to the Deity,) the same superlatively admirable operations of creation and providence; if it also doth prescribe to them the same supreme honors, services, praises, and acknowlegements to be paid unto them all: this may be abundantly enough to satisfy our minds, to stop our mouths, to smother all doubt and dispute about this high and holy mystery. It was exceeding goodness in God, that he would condescend so far to instruct us, to dis-

close so noble a truth unto us, to enrich our minds with that τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως, that 'most excellent knowlege of himself;' and it would be no small ingratitude and unworthiness in us anywise to suspect his word, or pervert his meaning; anywise to subject his venerable oracles to our rude canvasses and cavils. In fine, the proper employment of our mind about these mysteries, is not to search and speculate about them, to discourse flippantly and boldly about them; but with a pious credulity to embrace them, with all humble respect to adore them.

I have thus endeavored in some measure to defend the outworks of the orthodox doctrine concerning the blessed Trinity: it was beside my intent to insist so long thereon; but the matter did ἐφέλκεσθαι, was so attractive, that I could not waive showing my respect thereto.

I proceed now to that which I principally designed, the proposing briefly some practical considerations, apt to excite us to the exercising our understanding and affections on those wonderful dispensations of grace and mercy, vouchsafed to us by the holy Trinity, either conjunctly, or (as they κατ' οἰκονομίαν are expressed) separately.

We first should carefully study and duly be affected with gracious consent, and, as it were, confederacy of the glorious Three in designing and prosecuting our good; their unanimous agreement in uttering those three mighty words of favor to mankind, *Faciamus, Redimamus, Salvemus;* let us make man out of nothing, let us recover him from sin and perdition, let us crown him with joy and salvation; we should with grateful resentments observe them conspiring to employ their wisdom in contriving fit means and methods to exert their power in effectual accomplishment of what was requisite to the promoting of our welfare, the rescue of us from all misery, the advancing us to the highest degree of dignity, and instating us in the most perfect condition of happiness of which our nature is capable; in prosecution of that gracious design, which their joint goodness had projected for us. More distinctly,

1. We should set our mind on God the Father, before the foundation of the world from all eternity, pleasing to forecast

with himself the creation of us, and communication of his own image to us; endowing us with most excellent faculties of body and soul; subjecting the visible world to our use and governance; placing us in a state of great accommodation and delight; permitting us to fall, that he might raise us to a higher and better condition; resolving to send his own dear Son from his bosom, to procure and purchase the redemption of mankind; preparing and disposing the world for the reception of so great a mercy, by a general testification of his patience and beneficence, ('giving showers and fruitful seasons,' and 'filling the hearts of men with food and gladness,') but more especially by prophetical promises, predictions, and prefigurations: also suffering the generality of mankind so 'to proceed in its ways,' as might render it sensible of its error and unhappiness, of the need and benefit of a deliverance; then 'in the fulness of time,' when 'the creature did earnestly groan, and long for its recovery from vanity and slavery,' actually sending his only Son, and clothing him with human flesh, that conversing with us, he might discover to us his gracious intentions toward us, might confirm the truth thereof by miraculous works, might instruct us by his heavenly doctrine and holy life in our duty, and the terms of our salvation, then freely delivering him over unto death, and accepting his passion as a sacrifice expiating our sins, and meriting his favor toward us; then raising him as the first fruits from the dead, setting him at his right hand, investing him with authority to govern and save those who sincerely would believe in him and faithfully obey him; also sending and bestowing his Holy Spirit to dwell in them, to conduct, confirm, and comfort them in the ways of truth and righteousness. These, with manifold other intercurrent passages of gracious providence ascribed to God the Father, we should seriously mind, and so resent, as to be ravished with admiration of his mercy, to be inflamed with love of his goodness, to be possessed with gratitude toward him, to become thoroughly devoted to his service.

2. We should likewise mind the blessed Son of God concurring with his Father in all his purposes of love and mercy toward us, 'in making all things,' and 'sustaining them by the word of his power;' but especially in his (toward the freeing

us from the desperate miseries, corruptions, and slaveries, into which we were plunged) assuming human nature, leading therein a troublesome and toilsome life, for our benefit and instruction; undergoing a bitter and shameful death, for the atonement of our sins, and reconciliation of us to divine favor; purchasing great and precious promises, procuring high and glorious privileges for us; ascending into heaven to prepare us mansions of bliss; interceding for us with God, and pouring from above manifold blessings on us; the astonishing miracles of goodness, of wisdom, of condescension and patience, displayed in the management of which undertakings for us, what heart can well conceive, what tongue can utter? What amazement should it produce in us, to consider the brightest efflux of divine glory eclipsing and shrouding itself under so dark a cloud of mortal frailty; the most high stooping into the quality of so mean a creature; the first-born and heir-apparent of heaven descending from his throne of eternal majesty, and voluntarily degrading himself into the 'form of a servant,' clad in rags, worn with labor and travel, exposed to contempt and disgrace; to reflect on the great Creator and Sovereign Lord of all the world, who reared the heavens, and founded the earth, who possesseth and upholdeth all things, needing himself a shelter, pinched with want, taking alms from his slaves, and paying tribute to his subjects; to contemplate the Son of God, willingly styling himself the 'Son of man,' really subjecting himself to the duties, the necessities, the infirmities of human nature; suffering the coarsest hardships, and extremest disasters thereof; all this on the freest choice, with full contentment, and perfect submission to so mean and so distasteful a condition!

We may observe with how admirable goodness he did vouchsafe to converse with a froward generation of men, to instruct a stupid and indocile sort of people, with all sorts of beneficence, to oblige an incredulous, insensible, and ingrateful crew; with how invincible a meekness and patience he 'endured the contradiction of sinners,' the scornful reproaches, the wrongful calumnies, the spiteful and cruel usages of the envious and malicious world; being to the highest extremity despised, hated, maligned, and abused by those whom he had most highly honored, most affectionately loved, and conferred the greatest fa-

vors on. We may with astonishment contemplate that strange contest between divine patience and human wickedness, striving which of them should excel; when we do peruse and weigh those enigmatical passages, God accused by man of blasphemy, the eternal wisdom aspersed with folly, truth itself impleaded of imposture, essential love made guilty of mischief, and supreme goodness styled a malefactor; infinite power beat down, and trampled on by impotent malice; the judge of all the world, the fountain of all authority and right, arraigned, condemned, and executed for injustice; the 'desire of all nations' rejected by his own country and kindred; the joy of paradise (whose lightsome countenance doth cheer heaven itself) almost overwhelmed with grief, uttering lamentable groans, tortured with grievous agonies; the very heart of God bleeding, and the sole Author of life expiring.

We may farther study Jesus, with a hearty compassion, and tears gushing from his inmost bowels, pitying not these his own sufferings, but for the vengeance for them due and decreed unto his persecutors: we should mark him excusing their fault, and praying for their pardon; dying willingly for their good, when he died violently by their hand; passionately desiring their salvation, when they maliciously procured his destruction.

We should mind all the actions of the Son of God, our Saviour, with the most wise grounds, endearing circumstances, and precious fruits of them; his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession; as containing instances of the greatest charity and humility possible showed unto us, as arguments of the greatest love and gratitude due from us: mind them we should most seriously, so as to be heartily affected with them, so as to esteem worthily the transcendent honor done us by God assuming our nature, and exalting us to a conjunction with the divine nature; so as to be deeply sensible of our obligation to so immense a charity, that could do and suffer so much for us, without any desert of ours, yea, notwithstanding our exceedingly bad deserts, our rebellions and enmities against him; so as to detest the heinousness of our sins, that needed so mighty an expiation, that caused so horrid a tragedy; so as not to neglect so great salvation so frankly offered, so dearly pur-

chased for us; not to frustrate the designs of so unconceivable love and goodness, so as to obey readily so gracious a Master; to follow carefully so admirable an example; so as in imitation of him, and for his sake, to be meek and humble in heart, and in deed, seeing he did so infinitely condescend and abase himself for us; to be patient and submissive to his will, who stooped so low, and suffered so much for us; so as to bear a general affection to mankind, grounded like his, not on any particular interests, nor limited by any partial respects, but extended freely, in real desire and intention toward all; liberally to impart the good things we possess, and patiently to brook the crosses we meet with, and heartily to forgive the offences done to us; for that he freely did part with the greatest glories of eternity, with the highest dignities and the richest treasures of heaven, for our sake; when we were 'enemies in our minds by wicked works, dead in trespasses and sins,' guilty of numberless grievous offences against him, by his blood redeeming us from wrath, reconciling us to the mercy and favor of God.

3. We should also meditate on the blessed spirit of God, with equal goodness conspiring, and co-operating with all the purposes, to all the effects of grace, which conduce to our everlasting happiness; more especially as the repairer of our decayed frames, the enlivener of our dead souls, the infuser of spiritual light into our dark minds, the kindler of spiritual warmth into our cold hearts; the raiser of spiritual appetite to righteousness, and the relish of goodness in our stupid senses; the imparter of spiritual strength and vigor to our feeble powers; the author of all liberty, loosing us from captivity under the tyranny of Satan, from vassalage unto our own carnal lusts and passions; from subjection to a hard and imperious law, from bondage to the terrors of a guilty conscience: as him, that enableth us to perform the duties, and accomplish the conditions, required of us in order to our salvation, that qualifieth us to be the sons of God by his effectual grace, and assureth us that we are so by his comfortable testimony; as our sure guide in the ways of truth and virtue; our faithful counsellor in all doubts and darknesses; our mighty support and

succor in all needs, in all distresses; our ready guard against all assaults and temptations; our sweet comforter in all sadnesses and afflictions: who doth insinuate good thoughts, doth kindle holy desires, doth cherish pious resolutions, doth further honest endeavors in us: who only doth inflame our hearts with devotion toward God; doth encourage, doth enable us to approach unto him; doth prompt us with fit matter of request, and becometh advocate for the good success of our prayers.

We should mind him as the root of all good fruits growing in us, or sprouting from us; the producer of all good habits formed in us, the assister of all good works performed by us, the spring of all true content that we enjoy; to whom our embracing the faith, our continuing in hope, our working in charity, the purification of our hearts, the mortification of our lusts, the sanctification of our lives, the salvation of our souls are principally due, are most justly ascribed: as the author and preserver of so inestimable benefits unto us, let us mind him; and withal let us consider him as condescending to be a loving friend and constant guest to so mean and unworthy creatures; vouchsafing to attend over us, to converse with us, to dwell in us, rendering our souls holy temples of his divinity, royal thrones of his majesty, bright orbs of his heavenly light, pleasant paradises of his blissful presence; our souls, which naturally are profane receptacles of wicked and impure affections, dark cells of false and fond imaginations, close prisons of black and sad thoughts: as graciously 'striving with us,' striving to open and enter into our hearts, barred against him by vain conceits and vicious inclinations: striving to reclaim us from the sins and errors into which we are wont heedlessly or wilfully to precipitate ourselves; striving to make us, what in all duty and wisdom we should be, capable of divine favor, and fit for everlasting happiness: as enduring patiently manifold displeasures and disrespects from us, our rude oppositions against him, our frequent neglects of his kind admonitions, our many perverse humors, wanton freaks, wilful miscarriages, and unworthy dealings toward him.

We should thus mind the blessed Spirit of God, and be suit-

ably affected toward him; so as to be duly sensible and thankful for those unexpressible gifts and blessings indulged to us by him; so as to render all love and reverence, all praise and glory, all obedience and service to him, especially so as to admit him cheerfully into our hearts; yea, invite him thither by our earnest prayers; to make fit preparations for his reception and entertainment, (by cleansing our hearts from all loathsome impurities,) to make him welcome, and treat him kindly, with all civil respect, with all humble observance; not grieving and vexing him by our distasteful crossness and peevishness; not tempting him by our fond presumption, or base treachery; not extinguishing his heavenly light and holy fire by our foul lusts, our damp stupidities, our cold neglects, our neglects to foment and nourish them by the food of devout meditations and zealous desires: so let us mind him, as to admit gladly his gentle illapses, to delight in his most pleasant society, to hearken to his faithful suggestions, to comply with all his kindly motions, to behave ourselves modestly, consistently, and officiously toward him.

Thus should we employ our mind, all the faculties of our soul, our understanding, our will, our affections on the blessed Trinity, the Supreme of all things above, the Founder of that celestial society, into which as Christians we are inserted; the Sovereign of that heavenly kingdom of which we are subjects; the Fountain of all the good and happiness we can hope for in that superior state. To the performance of which duty there be arguments and inducements innumerable; it is the most proper and connatural object of our mind, that for which it is fittest, and for which it was designed; the best intelligible, and infinitely most amiable of all things. It is the most worthy and noble object, the contemplation of which, and affection whereto, will most elevate, most enrich, most adorn, most enlarge the capacities, and most satisfy the appetites of our souls; it is the most sweet and pleasant object, wherein all light, all beauty, all perfection do shine; the sight and love of which do constitute paradise, and beatify heaven itself. It is the most useful and beneficial object of our mind, which will best instruct us in what it concerneth us to know, will most incite us

to those duties which we are obliged to perform, will be most efficacious to the begetting in us those dispositions, which are indispensably requisite for the attainment and for the enjoyment of that everlasting bliss; unto which that one blessed Unity and glorious Trinity in its infinite mercy bring us all: to whom be all glory, honor, and praise for ever. Amen.

ADDITIONAL SERMONS,

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED MS. IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AT CAMBRIDGE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Sermons may perhaps not appear quite so accurate in construction, arrangement, and language, as those of Dr. Barrow which have been long before the public. The Editor, however, could not presume to make many or large alterations in the works of so great a man: he has rather confined himself to a few slight erasures, and the emendation of those manifest spots

——quas aut incúria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura.

SUMMARY OF

FIRST ADDITIONAL SERMON.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSE 12.

OUR Saviour's intent in coming into the world described. Preliminary inquiries concerning the subject of discourse and meditation. Heads of duties, enjoined by the text, laid down. Reason for our doing to others as we would they should do to us, considered, viz. a regard to our own happiness: the rule itself also settled on its true grounds, and within its just limitations. The several capacities in which we can benefit or injure a man considered: 1. his person: subdivision of this into soul and body. Method in which the first of these may be treated, fully considered; 2. method of treating the second; 3. his good name: 4. his estate: definitions of *distributive* and *commutative* justice. Consideration also of justice as it relates to trade and commerce. Definition of charity: pattern of this proposed to us by our blessed Saviour: its duties considered. Persuasions to our due exercise of the rule recommended by the text. 1. The end for which we are made considered. 2. The intrinsic beauty and holiness of the rule itself. 3. We and our fellow creatures all bear the same stamp and impress of heaven; and mercy is due to our neighbor for the sake of God, whose image he bears. 4. If we be just and generous in the time of our prosperity, it will cause a like affection in others towards us. 5. Security hence arising to our lives, honor, riches, reputation, &c. 6. Consideration of that reward which for our obedience we shall hereafter receive of God.

FIRST ADDITIONAL SERMON.

DUTY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOR.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSE 12.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

THE grand intendment of the holy Jesus, his coming into the world, the design of his laws, the reason of those many stupendous miracles which he wrought, together with the whole tendency of his life, was to display the blessed majesty of his Father; to implant in men's minds due conceptions of the being of God, whom before they falsely worshipped under the several shapes of the sun and moon, of beasts and birds, of stocks and stones, or of the trifling and less considerable parts of the universe; and to raise human nature out of those unhappy and miserable circumstances, in which sin had placed it, by propagating religion and piety, virtue and goodness, justice and charity over the face of the earth: to this purpose he as well illustrated the laws ingrafted on our minds by nature, as inforced our obedience thereunto, in having both offered distinct and clearer accounts of the dictates thereof, and laid down more cogent motives that might persuade us to observe them: thus whatever was scattered up and down in the law, or declared by the prophets at several times in divers places, concerning justice and beneficence, he has compendiously but fully delivered in the text: 'therefore all things,' &c.; which words are a general rule for all and every action that may happen between man and man; and are so to be understood that we own their obligation, not only in an affirmative, but in a negative propo-

sition: for instance, if it be our duty to do unto others what we would have them do unto us, then is this negative so too; whatever ye would not have others do to you, do not unto them: which being the exact rule by Christ given of behavior, all the difficulty will lie in this, that there be no mistake in applying single actions to the rule; for although the rule be straight which we are to measure by, yet if our application be disorderly, it will make the whole process false and erroneous.

To avoid all which inconveniences, we shall entertain the following considerations for the subject of our meditation and discourse.

We will in general inquire, 1. what we would have others do unto us; that is, what measure one reasonable creature would expect at the hand of another: 2. what we would not have done unto ourselves: 3. give the precise limitations of that rule; and after these general inquiries, that we may come nearer to practice, we shall run it down into particulars, and resolve some of the more material cases that may usually occur to most men.

And since from what is spoken it may appear that the doing as we would be done by, is to be understood of those actions whereby we may do good or injury to other men, it shall be our business to reduce them to their several heads; which I conceive may be these; 1. their persons; under which head we are to take notice of both their bodies and souls, as far as we are able to contribute to the well-being of either: 2. their reputation or good name, which ought to be as tender to us as the apple of our eye: 3. their estates, in relation to which, our dealing with other men ought to be just and merciful; and this justice we shall take notice of in its double signification; 1. distributive; 2. commutative: distributive justice will guide us in giving rewards or punishments, in discouraging or favoring and giving countenance to men, according to their merit. Justice commutative will direct us in matters of trade, buying and selling, and all manner of exchange between one and another: then, 2. our actions must be merciful; which mercy must bear a proportion to our abilities, and particular condition, namely, the poverty and distress, adversity or imprisonment of those we extend it to. And the last part of my dis-

course shall be persuasive; to induce you all, from the reasonableness of the thing, to observe and practice what I shall have said: and that by the following considerations: 1. from viewing the end for which we were made, which was not barely to gratify our selfish humors, but to serve our Maker in doing the greatest good we can to our fellow creatures; 2. from the intrinsic beauty and loveliness of the rule itself; 3. because we all bear the same stamp and impress of heaven; 4. because if we be just and generous in our prosperity, it will cause like affections in others towards us in the time of our affliction, and the day of distress: 5. did we but all do as we would be done by, it would be the best and greatest security of our lives, honors, reputations, power, and riches: 6. from consideration of the reward we may expect of God hereafter for the doing of our duty.

I begin with the first, namely, what we all would have others do unto us. It must be confessed by every wary inquirer, that happiness is the ultimate and farthest end which a rational creature can propose, of all his actions; which happiness doth consist in the preservation of his being in the best, that is, the most comfortable condition and state it is capable of: whence it follows that we naturally desire such usage of all men, as conduceth to our good, that is, our preservation, which is the main and general design of us all: for existence is so far valuable above the not being, as it is the foundation of perception; and perceptive faculties are so long desirable, as the pleasure they receive from objects exceeds the pain. For if once the torments put into the balance prove too heavy for the delights, I can see no reason but it will be better not to be, than to be miserable; since no man can reasonably think there is any good in existence, when he is only preserved in being for torment, that is, to have every faculty of his mind vexed and disquieted, and every member of his body racked and tortured. Wherefore whatsoever may administer joy or comfort, whatsoever may remove jealousies and disquietude of soul, all that is productive of tranquillity and contentment, all that is the cause of cheerfulness and real mirth, or brings forth satisfaction and peace, whatever carrieth along with it solid pleasure or profit, as being advantageous to us in the several circumstances of life, all this we would that other men should do unto us, and so are obliged

to do it unto them. Thus also as our wants vary, so do our desires of others' help; for being in misery, we implore comfort; if ignorant, we desire information; if in doubt, counsel; if wandering, to be guided to the right way; if in weakness, friendly to be supported; if fallen, timely to be helped up; in our dealing we would have just and kind usage; in poverty, relief; when hungry and naked, food and raiment. Now from hence it would be easy to collect what we would not have others do unto us; that is, whatever may be contrary to these desires, as having a certain tendency to our destruction and misery.

Thus we all desire to avoid the accession of new grievances to old calamities, and think it hard measure that for our ignorance we be scoffed at or derided: being dubious or full of scruples, we would not be more perplexed; if down, we judge it severe to be trampled on, and very unfriendly to be reproached for our poverty, or upbraided with our miscarriages. And indeed to triumph over another man's misfortune is confessedly so barbarous and inhuman, that those who are most guilty of this practice, are ashamed, and blush to own it. This being the general view of what we would, and what we would not have done, before I descend into a more large and particular account, I think it expedient, according to my promise, first to settle the rule on its true bottom, and within its just limitations. If therefore we look again into the words, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them,' you may perceive that the subject and matter of this rule are actions that proceed from the will: now your will being often not only erroneous itself, but also the cause of all your errors, in giving her assent to propositions either not clearly or not distinctly understood, it will be but reasonable that we show and point out the rule wherefrom the will is to take her guidance and directions; which rule is right reason. The meaning then of this precept, 'what you would have done unto you,' is whatever is reasonable, whatsoever measure, as consonant to the laws of equity and justice, you desire should be given to you, return the same. Since, if the will were left to itself without a guide, then because we sometimes laboring with an indisposed mind desire things destructive and pernicious to ourselves, we

might do what is so unto others. And the malcontent that being weary of his life, desires any one would dispatch him, might become the murderer of his neighbor, and justify the action too in having done only to another what he desired to be done unto himself. Thus the prince should be obliged always to forgive the foulest crimes of rebellion; because if it were possible for him to be in the condition of a rebel, he would desire to be pardoned himself; insomuch that hereby the current of justice would be stopped up, and all processes against malefactors receive their period. For though we were offenders in the highest manner, yet we should always ourselves desire forgiveness; and thereby we should be bound always to pardon; which is destructive of the essence of a commonwealth, and for that reason not to be allowed. So that from hence we gather, that our will is to be regulated by a farther rule than itself. That it is not whatever we would by the motions of our rude passions, but that which, proceeding from the calm and rectified dictates of our own conscience, we would have done unto us, we do the same unto our neighbor. Wherefore, although, if we consulted self-love and passion, we should for the worst misdemeanors beg pardon, we must not suffer the murderer to go unpunished, but deal with him according to his action; forasmuch as it is enjoined by the positive laws of God, and enforced by natural light, that he who spills man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. Hitherto have you had discoursed unto you, in the gross, what usage we would have of one another, and also the rule of willing and nilling to others and ourselves, circumscribed within the due bounds thereof. Proceed we now particularly to consider man in his several capacities, wherein we either can help him, or do him an injury, which be, 1. his person; under which are to be considered his soul and body, as far as we are capable of contributing to their well being; for since we all hope for the greatest good to ourselves in respect of both, we should use our best endeavors in preserving the soul and body of our neighbor.

I. As to his soul: now as the soul is a more noble principle and of longer duration than the body, man's everlasting happiness or eternal misery depending chiefly on its well or ill management, so also should we love it more affectionately, and be ready to contribute, as far as lies in our power, to its happy

being: an employment so generous, that he who advanceth the present good or future felicity of another man's soul, re-impresseth the defaced image of God on his own, and in some sense may be said to be a sharer with the blessed Jesus in the saving of the world.*

Now this must be done, first, by interceding with God to bestow on him all those heavenly graces that are necessary to the constituting of a true Christian; more particularly by soliciting heaven, that he may be confirmed in his faith if weak and unstable, supplied with those dispositions to godliness which he wants, and those enlarged which he hath; that God would assist him in opposing the sins, which by reason of the temper of his constitution, or course of life, oftenest assault and most easily overpower him; and that the divine aid may come suitably and in season to his rescue from the encounters and onsets which may be given by Satan or the flesh; that thereby he may be enabled to walk humbly and thankfully before God, uprightly with man, and holily with himself; and also that those inclinations to virtue and goodness, which divine grace had begun, may be maintained and cherished in him; so that he may go on in an intire conformity to God's holy will even unto his end † Secondly, after your prayers for the good of his soul, you must make your application to him yourself by your counsel, and encourage him by your example: 1. by counsel; which ought to be various and answerable to

* How blessed a work is it to fit up the soul and adorn it for God's sight and approbation, which back to him must go as soon as ever it parts from its ruinated and uninhabitable body. Then shall dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to him who gave it: Eccl. xii. 7.

How joyful a thing will it be to have been instrumental in making a soul delightful and acceptable to God, to have assisted Christ in carrying on our redemption.

† You have full assurance that, praying with an holy and sincere mind, your prayer shall be heard; 'for though the Lord is far from the wicked, yet he heareth the prayer of the righteous:' Prov. xv. 29. You are encouraged to it by St. Paul's example, 'We pray always for you nevertheless;' i. 11. and directed by St. James's precept—'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another; for the effectual prayer of the righteous man availeth much:' Jam. v. 16.

the condition of his mind; for you are to advise him about his soul in such a manner as may be most productive of its happiness. The way to be truly happy is to do well; to do well, is by our actions to answer those very ends for which we were made; but the ends for which we were made, are both to glorify God in the highest manner, by worshipping him as he himself requires, in pure devotion, with a sincere mind, and by doing all the good we can unto all men: which two things, as they comprehend the whole duty that God expects of us, so are they the true interest of the soul to observe. But since a blind and misguided zeal can never do any thing that will be acceptable to God, in that God has so great a regard to the intendments of every action, which, if amiss, the whole action will be so; it is convenient you direct your counsel to him, by way of information, in such manner as that he may arrive at a clear and intire knowlege of his duty. For how can he be obedient to the divine will who knows not what it is that it doth require? So that if they with whom you converse be possessed with a thick and palpable ignorance in matters of religion, before all things let it be your business to instruct thoroughly and enlighten clearly their minds, to such measure and degree that they may entertain true notions of God's holy essence and his blessed attributes, and of all that he has willed of us, either in his positive laws, or in the natural laws engraven on our very beings. And having thus instructed your neighbor in respect of his soul, let, 2. your work be persuasion; that he would heartily betake himself to the practice of what he by you understands concerning God and himself; forasmuch as knowlege is vain which can in nowise be useful to the services of life, and labor mispent which is productive of no fruit: besides, our ties to obedience are made stronger and more obliging by the increase of our knowlege, and so the shame will be greater and the crime more foul to violate them; hence is it that the servant who knows and yet neglects his master's will, shall be punished with more stripes. He that in persuading would manage his affair without miscarriage, should be furnished and provided with such arguments, as will evidence to the person with whom he treats, the necessity of embracing his advice, and the pleasant

consequences that will accrue therefrom,* and the punishments to be inflicted in case of disobedience: so that since God has promised a most happy condition to those who live well, and denounced utter ruin to the deserters of his laws, it will prove the true interest of every one of us not only to be religious, but to promote it in others; if it be granted that God is able to make good what he has promised, and willing to perform what he is able: to do which, you are to take notice, these three things only are required; 1. to know the nature of a creature; 2. to be vested with a power of doing good or harm to it; lastly, the having a will to exert this power in the destruction or advance of a creature according to its behavior: all which qualifications are eminently found in God.

1. His knowlege. It is not to be understood that we can be rendered miserable or happy by him who is ignorant wherein our happiness or misery consists. The physician knows not how to administer his potion with security of his patient's life, or without manifest hazard of his own reputation, if he have not before investigated the true reasons of the distemper, in such sort as to be able to apply what is proper and apposite for removing the causes thereof.

But God, being a great searcher of the heart and trier of the reins, knows the mould wherein we were made, and the very constitutive ingredients of our essence, in having been the author of the same; insomuch that nothing which belongs unto us can be hid from his eyes; whence it appears, he knows what is good for us better than we do ourselves, or any body besides.

2. God's power: for as much as we can humble and crush, when we please, those that be weaker than ourselves, their daring threats or allurements are so contemptible, that, if not to be wondered at, they are to be smiled at.

Nor do the circumstances greatly vary between our equals and us, in that we can repulse the onsets they give us, with the same force; and so they must expect their own ruin in attempting ours. But if we consider God, that he so infinitely surpasseth us in power as to be able to dash us all into nothing,

* The most prevailing motives to action are taken from the consideration of the reward that will follow obedience, and the punishments to be inflicted for non-performance.

and by the word wherewith he made them to turn the same creatures into non-existence, it will work the most courageous into a dreadful awe of his power, and excite in us all reverence of his great name. For since, in the idea we have of God naturally, are included all perfections; and since power is a perfection; it is necessary that we suppose him omnipotent, or that all power is in him or derived from him: insomuch that, as he can bestow on us all that is requisite to our felicity and well-being, without being engaged to any other for aid or assistance; so also can he spoil us of all the good we be possessed of; or hinder us from all that we can desire, to the rendering us completely miserable and desolate, notwithstanding all the resistance which may be made against him; for all the power of all the nations on earth combined and knit together, are of no moment compared with his, whereof they be but a small part: so that if God once arise, his enemies must be scattered before him. Wherefore it behoveth us all, with a watchful eye and care, as we would avoid utter confusion, to observe his pleasure and to obey his commands.

3. God's will. Now having made out to you that God has a clear knowlege of what is good for his creature, and an absolute, abundantly-sufficient power of dealing with it according to this knowlege, that is, of blessing or eternally torturing it, as it shall behave itself; it is farther necessary, in the last place, to the convincing of any rational being that it behoveth him in every action to have a special regard to the divine promises and threats, to demonstrate how God's will bears a proportion to his knowlege and power; that, as God understands wherein the felicity of his creatures consists, and is able to prosper or blast them, so likewise he is willing on their performing the conditions which he has proposed, or on their disobedience, to let forth his power in their happiness or ruin: which may be gathered from his promises that will be infallibly performed: for veracity being one of the attributes of God, and all his attributes being inseparable from his essence, it must follow, that, whatsoever he has promised, we ought to believe he will make it good; because it is inconsistent that he should be God and not be true, or that falsity, which is imperfection, should be found in God, whom we suppose completely perfect.

Now that *de facto* he has said, he will reward or punish us, according as we be sorrowful for our sins, or continue in impenitency, as it is evident from many particular places of holy writ, so it may be proved from the whole design of the Scripture; which is nothing else but to offer salvation to believers, and decree damnation to those who obstinately go on in the evil of their ways: 'he that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.'

Thus I have more largely insisted on this head of counsel, (and where no counsel is, the people fall) in order to the good of the soul; and have showed the welfare thereof to depend on God wholly, as well because the great design of every action should be for the preservation of our better part, (for what will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and to lose his own soul?) as that I might accommodate you with a copious number of arguments taken from the divine attributes, to awaken, if not to frighten men into a serious consideration of their latter end, and a speedy use of those means which are agreeable thereunto. Certainly motives derived from the divine omniscience, power, and goodness, should be sufficient to prevail with him, who has not sinned himself below the capacity of a brute, to an intire reformation of his life: wherefore if it be true that God better knows how to promote our happiness than we ourselves, (as he certainly doth,) if he is best able to act what he knows, and most willing to do what he is able, there cannot be the least room for objection, why we should not put ourselves intirely under his protection, and consequently devote both soul and body to his service. And this is that armor I would have you fence yourselves with, the reasons and arguments to be provided of, for the promoting of real goodness, and the putting out of countenance the wickedness and debauchery of a corrupted world; which is nothing else but to do good to the souls of others.

I have already showed what we would, and what we would not have done to ourselves, in general; and that we must do as we would be done by to others in relation to their souls, bodies, reputations, and estates; that we must do good to the soul by intercession to God for it.

2. You are to promote the good of your neighbor's soul by

your example. Whatever is exposed to the view of our own eyes, acts as an example, more powerfully engages our attention, and sinking lower in the mind leaves more lasting impressions behind it; forasmuch as the image of a thing formed by immediate vision, is more adequate, and in distincter order contains more parts of that which it represents, than any idea that can be framed in the brain of what is barely known, by the relation of another.

Mere precepts, without a carriage suitable thereunto, exhibit but a lifeless religion, and men thereby are not more scared from sin than they are afraid of a dead carcass; whereas a life led according to our doctrine is powerful in persuading and convicting the most obstinate sinner; who, although he may sleep under your wholesome instructions, yet by your holy example will awaken at last to a sense of his folly.

The cowardly soldier that was never warmed into any valorous resolutions, by hearing long and handsome orations in praise of fortitude, would be ashamed not to follow the courageous conduct of his general in the hottest pieces of service. Neither can I see any reason why men should believe you are real with them in your advice, when you confute it by a contrary practice. How can I deem him serious with me, in telling it is my duty to be chaste and temperate, that lives himself in open adultery and common drunkenness? Will other men be brought into the opinion that the arguments you urge for justice and mercy, are the secret sense of your soul and the pure issues of your mind, while you yourself act the part of a thief and extortioner, and of one who grinds, as the prophet speaks, the face of the poor? What availeth it to exhort others to be faithful in performing their promises, if you never keep your own? Will men hearken to you in teaching them that it is the command of Christ to do as they would be done unto, if notwithstanding, in all your actions, you manage the interests of self?

Now, it is to be acknowleged they can do but little good, with their perhaps otherwise pertinent and suitable advice, who are the cause of so much licentiousness by their evil conversation: add to all which, that the mischievous effect of a bad example is to breed in others a disesteem of religion; for how

can they entertain any brave and generous thoughts of that religion which licenses its followers in such profligate courses, and permits that which is forbidden by the natural understanding? for the heathens by the bare guidance of reason only did constantly avoid it. I must either think that religion mean and sordid, which allows men the practice of such villanies, or else think the followers thereof guilty of the basest hypocrisy and dissimulation, that lead lives so wide from what they profess.

So that it is just matter of grief to all good men that it should be as true, as it is little regarded, that none talk more of religion, nor live by it less, than this present age. Insomuch that a pagan who has been a spectator of such dealings cannot think other than that we make religion a mask for our most loathsome miscarriages: since, were we fully persuaded of a future state after this life, and of a God who will severely inquire into every human action, as having irrevocably decreed to make us sharers of eternal felicity if we make good the conditions on our parts required, or of torturing us (supposing our disobedience) with insupportable anguish, this could not but make us very anxious in our deportment and present management of ourselves: forasmuch as all the glories of the world, especially considering the shortness of the time wherein they may be enjoyed, bear so inconsiderable a shadow of proportion to eternity.

Wherefore it will remain, that he must say, either that our religion is repugnant to reason and the principles of government, (as certainly self-interest is,) or else that we disbelieve it. Therefore be pleased to perpend, that if religion ought to be the grand concern of the world, namely, that we all carefully do what God has enjoined in such manner as shall be acceptable to him; and if in those things alone our happiness consists; then to bring a scandal on this religion, as every evil liver necessarily doth, must be so great a piece of ingratitude to God, and so pernicious and deadly to mankind, that in reason it may almost be deemed unpardonable. Let thus much suffice for our behaviour toward our neighbor in respect of the soul.

II. We must do as we would be done by, as to the body. The body is of so near alliance and so closely united to the soul,

that by violence done to one they both suffer, and like partners share in the same misfortunes; which is the reason that if the body be indisposed by a wound or disease, the soul is disabled from doing its office; because any hurt to the body causeth so strong and vehement a sensation in the soul, which we call grief, that in a manner it depriveth it of all power of surveying with any clearness that copious imagery which it has of objects. Wherefore men in pain become unfit for business, by not being able to keep their minds closely attentive to any thing that is long or intricate; and by consequence are debarred the comfortable use of riches or greatness; that is, whatever this world counts either profitable or pleasant.

Forasmuch as through ill-natured passion, a man may do that injury to his neighbor's body, in a moment, which is irreparable, and never to be compensated by all the friendly offices he can do in his whole life after; this consideration ought highly to influence the behavior of churlish masters to their servants, who show less kindness to their man than their beast, and treat him with more blows and less civility than their spaniel; as if they had acquired an absolute power over his body to maim or dismember it at the instance of their brutish inclinations: which actions, as they are contrary to Christianity, which commands love and humility, so they would be derided by an infidel or Turk: and you would deem the practisers of them either devoid of all reason, or, which is worse, that they always abuse it.

If we do as we would be done by, how comes it to pass that we commit those outrages on other men without regret, that we can ourselves with no patience suffer? Is this any other than a confutation of all the methods of our Saviour, whose whole behavior was full of compassion to his creatures? or doth Christianism inspire men rather with the cruelty of the tiger than the meekness of the lamb? If this be false, as it certainly is, it would not be easy to assign what is more opposite to the principles of our religion than our own practices; for nothing enjoins charity, good nature, and kindness, more than our religion; and nobody observes them less than ourselves. Charity commands us to love our enemies; but we even hate our friends: whereas it enjoins us a benign and gentle carriage to those

below us, we saucily affront our governors, and show how ill we brook God's dominion, by the indignities we cast on those he has deputed over us; insomuch that had the primitive Christians delivered those tenets which we practise, so repugnant are they to government and the order of civil society, I believe our Saviour's name would not have been heard of beyond Jewry, and the Christian religion never been propagated farther than the country in which it was born: for it appears from reason and experience, how powerful an influence religion has on the peace and quiet of kingdoms; that nothing so effectually secures the public peace, or so easily works disturbance and ruin, as its good or evil administration: wherefore, if there be any principles of nobleness and generosity in us, springing from a being distinct from our own body, or if there be any remains of man in us beside the shape, methinks we should not carry so unequal a deportment between ourselves and others, and one so contradictory to reason. Let us but consider how much time is spent and trouble undergone barely for nourishing the body; with what care we guard it from outward force, and secure it from inward diseases; which as they are sufficient tokens of our great love to it, so are they of our inhuman and unchristian behavior to our neighbor, whom we are offended with on no occasion, and barbarously murder without remorse. Daily experience has made it too evident, I should remind you, how plentiful the mischiefs are that spring from an unkindly usage of our neighbor's body; especially if the person be in the capacity of a father, or master of a family, where the young infant feels the wound, and the assault reacheth to the whole house. Wherefore to conclude this head of discourse, let us seriously consider, when any occasion is offered of quarrel with our equals, or of giving correction to our inferiors, how highly we value our own flesh and blood, and in a proportionable tenderness do so unto them as we would be dealt by ourselves.

III. We must deal with our neighbor as we desire he should deal with us, in respect of his good name. How faulty men on this account have been, is manifest from the observation, that there is nothing we be more solicitously jealous of than our own, and nothing we be more lavish of than our

neighbor's reputation. How, on small hints, trifling occasions, imperfect reports, and groundless stories, do we wound the credit of our neighbor, which is as dear to him as life itself; how we blight the esteem he has abroad; weaken the value he has at home; and cast a mist over all that is bright, or giveth lustre to his name and reputation! And yet, notwithstanding this uncivil usage of our neighbor's name, we are so nice of our own repute, as hardly to be induced to make any overtures or terms of reconciliation and peace to him who shall diminish the least part thereof: the truth is, men in the eager pursuit of riches, and power, and other worldly advantages, designedly aim at the purchase of a great name; for to what purpose should they heap up wealth, and whatever carrieth esteem with it, if they did not secretly please themselves with those reflections which they conceive others make on their pomp and grandeur? Not but that I believe a brave soul thinks too meanly of the greater part of men (who usually are corrupted by interest, or blinded by prejudice) to measure the extent of its felicity by vulgar breath, or to account its excellency from common talk.

But every one would have his actions thought, if not worthy of praise, yet such as may be excused, and so not to be the subject of uncivil censure: hence it is, the most debauched and lewd person is loath to be upbraided with his uncleanness, and the murderer with his cruelty; nor will a covetous man own his extortion, or a conceited person his vain glory, but will find out some specious pretences that may soften, if they cannot wholly excuse his miscarriage. Wherefore when you reprove your brother, let it be without sharpness; and when you tell him of his crime, let it be without bitterness: when you command him, let it be with generous intentions, and for good reasons, and on due measure; for too much praise is fawning, too little is ill-nature: but if you do it justly, you teach him its true value.

IV. This rule of doing as we would be done by, extends to men's estates; in all dealings thereunto relating, we being obliged to be both just and merciful; which are great instances of our love.

1. Justice: it may be defined a rendering to all men every

thing they have a real title to; so that to detain or keep back that from another what he has a right too, is injustice.

Now seeing a right to a thing may be many ways acquired, as by gift, promise, bargain, or contract; by inheritance or service done; it will follow that in so many ways we may injure men: and because we by the unforced instigation of nature do all desire to escape any injury or wrong, therefore we must use especial care that by injustice we wrong not others, of what they have a real title to, or propriety in, by any of these particular titles. We may look on justice in a double respect; the one distributive, the other commutative.

1. Distributive justice is placed in giving rewards or punishments, in conferring honors, or in setting men out to disgrace, according as they have merited: the example whereof belongs to the magistrates and those who take cognizance of offenders. The ends of it are to promote goodness, and enlarge the dominions of virtue, by raising its followers to true honor, and securing unto them infinite satisfaction and peace of mind, (which causes them not to be dejected at the untoward usages of a cross fortune, and to bear up cheerfully against the most unkindly assaults of malice or cruelty,) and to suppress villanies and debauchery, by exposing the persons wherein they are found, to open shame, and frightening other men from a like practice by their ignominious sufferings.

These are the only principles, the use of which will fix and settle princes on their thrones, so that their power and crowns cannot be moved, and assure to them a long and constant, a ready and willing obedience, from the subject; for such is their sovereign and diffusive nature and virtue, that their healing and kindly influence will reach the greatest monarchs, as it is beneficial to their meanest vassals and slaves.

2. Justice is commutative; which consists in a conscientious performance of all promises, bargains, or contracts.

1. Promises: in making a promise, we pass our right over to another: so that he who promiseth becomes a debtor, and the thing promised becomes a debt: if therefore we desire that all men should pay unto us the debts they owe, then are we obliged to make good our promises unto them: and indeed we should be more exact in the payment of a promise than the discharge

of a debt; for in it our honor and reputation, which are most dear to us, are given for security. Besides, as in nothing we can more to the life resemble God (one of whose attributes it is to be true) than in our faithfulness, so to stand to our covenants is the only tie wherewith societies and converse are held together, or can be supported. Add to all this, the lovely consequences which result from keeping our word; the love and favor it conciliates to us from God, and with that the honor it procures us among men; the esteem and credit it raiseth to us wherever we be known, and how far, from a punctual exactness, we may be trusted in commerce above others: insomuch that warily to promise only what we are able, and carefully to perform what we have promised, is a virtue so amiable and full of beauty, that it must need transport him who truly considers it, with admiration, and inflame his appetite after the purchase thereof: it at once endears us to heaven, and makes us favorites of the world; not only bringing wealth and honor with it, but heaping up durable treasures for us in the regions above, which are without the wasting reach of time and envy.

To this place it belongs, that we take notice how strict an obligation lieth on all masters to give unto their servants those wages for which they have contracted; and not to keep back from the laborer his due, nor to withhold from the hireling what he has justly merited by the sweat of his brow. For if it be forbidden that you should muzzle the mouth of the ox, which treadeth out the corn; then a greater engagement on you ought to be acknowleged, not to defraud your poor brother (in all things else your equal) of the wages due to him by promise; which he may dearly have earned, as well by the consumption of his time, as the expence of his strength and spirits. He having thus purchased it, it ceases to be yours, and therefore to detain it would be injustice: hitherto is reducible the necessity of paying your debts; and although a man may as lawfully challenge what you have promised, as the repayment of that he lent you, yet not to restore what you borrow seems more heinous, in that you make him of whom you borrow so much worse than he was before, by how much the thing he lent cometh to.

2. Justice commutative restrains us from depriving our neighbor of the goods which he actually possesses; not only his money, but whatever is valuable by money; as houses, lands, the fruits of the earth, or cattle. From which it follows that robberies, or thefts, are severely prohibited; that is, either assaults, where, by violence and force you spoil a man of his property, or secretly, and under covert of the night (which time best becomes the darkness of the deed) you purloin from him his substance. Now besides that the thief is not likely long to persist undisclosed, from the industrious search of the sagacious inquirer whom he has wronged, (the lively sense of whose loss makes him spare neither cost nor any labor to discover the malefactor,) did he but reflect with what fear he begins, with what terror he carries on, and probably with what shame he shall end his sinful enterprise; with what a ghastly retinue of servants he is environed, suspicions and jealousies, hunger and cold, the gloomy night, the horrors of a blacker conscience, a trembling hand, a beating heart, and a dizzy head, all which are the inseparable companions of his villany; with what solicitousness he labors, if he miss his game, and with what fright, if he obtain it; all this surely should be sufficient to scare any one who is in his sober wits, from the practice of this sin; especially if the amazing and dismal consideration of judgment to come enter into his thoughts.

3. I shall consider justice, as it relateth to trade, buying and selling, and all manner of traffic; wherein these two general rules are to be observed; that you take no advantage of other men's ignorance or necessity.

1. That you take no advantage of their ignorance, which may be these several ways:

1. In using false weights and corrupted measures. The buyer expects that quantity which is allowed by the laws of the country, and the custom of the place; so that he who useth a false measure, or a deceitful balance, keeps back from the buyer part of what he bought; which is plain deceit, and owned by all men so to be.*

* Therefore 'a false balance is abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight.' Prov. xi. 1.

2. If the seller hide and conceal any fault or imperfection in his commodity: neither will it excuse him to say, the question was never put whether the thing was faultless; for if by the money bid it may be collected that the buyer snpposed the thing complete, in having offered the full value, were it so, it will follow that he is cheated of as much as the thing sold is worse by such fault or imperfection; and so this is as manifest a fraud as that of a deceitful balance, and which, though the laws do not, God certainly will punish.

3. Notwithstanding the weight be good, the measure full, and the thing sold void of faults, yet if, taking advantage of his ignorance, you make your chapman pay above the value and worth of the thing, this also will prove no other than deceit; because, were it your own case, you would think it hard measure to be abused in the price for your ignorance of the thing, or overreached for trusting to another man's honesty.

2. The second head I remarked of injustice in trade, is the necessity of other men. This happens, either when we, having monopolized or grasped all things of one sort and kind into our own clutches, make them bear what unreasonable rate soever we please; or when we prey on another man's need, and force him to pay not only for the commodity, but for his own necessity too, in exacting a sum which we know he never would give but by reason of his present exigency: this is extortion: for you should not enhance the value of that you sell, unless the price either was raised to you, or has improved since the buying. To this head may be referred the unreasonable disproportions which some men extort for the use of their money, because the borrower has an absolute necessity for so much, and may not have credit, perhaps, to take it up in another place: for with what conscience can he demand double as much as he knows it is possible for another to gain by what he lends him? And thus much have I discoursed of justice; which, whether it be suitable to any man's practice, I meddle not; but sure I am, it is agreeable to your judgments, and on account of that usage which you all heartily desire at the hands of others.

I am now to speak of charity; which is the distinguishing character and inseparable mark of a Christian; by which our

Lord the holy Jesus has taught us to know and rightly understand him; 'By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another:' it is a benign and sweet temper of soul, which disposeth us, not only sincerely to wish, but willingly to do all the good we can to other men, in their several capacities.

I cannot give a better or more exact view of charity, than by representing to you the blessed Jesus for a pattern; who made it his business to heal the sick, to give sight to the blind, to give life to those who were dead, to dispossess devils, to inspire men with holiness and excite them to lead a righteous life, to animate his followers with a zeal for works of friendship and mercy, to shame men out of their cruelty and self-interest by his own example, letting them see how he came to ransom their souls, and to vindicate them from the intolerable consequences of lying under the divine displeasure, to a state of bliss and immortality; insomuch that his whole life appeared a continued act of goodness.

Now it is not to be expected that I should give you such intire rules and laws as might guide you about charity, and as I have done of justice; because it is not confined to any limits that are fixed, but depends as well on your own power and abilities, as on the circumstances which the person is in, whom you design to relieve.

Wherefore we may conclude that charity requires we neglect no opportunity of doing good; so that, who is a fit object of our mercy, and when it is we have an opportunity, are things left to God and our consciences to judge. It is justice not to rob the poor; but charity requires us to relieve them: it is against justice to deal deceitfully with our friend, but it is inconsistent with charity not to love our enemy: so that where one leaves us, you see, the other takes its beginning; charity being an appendage, and as it were an additional act, made and annexed by the royal court of heaven, to the laws of nature, which were before promulgated in our souls concerning equity.

Particular duties of charity are these: 1. that you give your best counsel and directions to your brother; and this in the most prevailing language, and when he is most fit to receive it. If you reprove him, let your expressions be without rancor

and sharpness, so that he may be convinced that the end of your advice is his interest, and the cause of reprehending him, your love.

2. That you forgive injuries;* nor let your passions boil up to the height, so that you must think it necessary to repay the indignity which was cast on you, by a greater; but keep yourself in an equal and unconcerned humor, notwithstanding the most impetuous assaults that are made on your temper: which will breed that meekness, wherewith you will become able to obey the precept of your Saviour, 'that being smitten on the one cheek, you turn the other;' that is to say, you will be so far from seeking revenge of an affront, as to be ready to receive another, and to make up the difference by repaying all with good turns.

3. Charity forbids that you should envy any happy advance your neighbor has of his fortune; but commands that you rejoice at his prosperity, and as much as in you lies, promote his greatness; which doubtless would be done, were your love of him and yourself equal.†

4. Charity enjoins you to lend your aid and succor to the rescuing your neighbor out of any calamity that has befallen him, whether it be from poverty or from the violence of others: one commands your beneficence and liberality, the other asks the use of your hand and strength; and both require you to compassionate his condition as your own.‡

At length I shall enter on the persuasive part of this dis-

* 'But if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.' Matth. vi. 14. This duty of mercifully sparing our neighbors when they have wronged us, ensures to us not only their good will, but the tender and gentle usage of God Almighty to our great crimes, wherewith we have offended him.

† If prosperity attends an holy man, we ought to rejoice, because it is God's blessing; if a sinner, rather pity than envy him, whose end shall be bitterness and destruction.

‡ For the compassion we have on our indigent and helpless brother, Christ our Saviour will put to his own score, and look on it favorable as if it were shown to himself. 'For as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' Matth. xxv. 40.

course, and use some motives, from the nature of the thing, to induce you to the practice of what I have said.

1. The first shall be taken from the end, for which we were made. Man did not, like a mushroom, spring by chance out of the ground; nor had he his being of himself; but was the curious workmanship (except that his sin is derived from man as the proper fountain) of another, who clothed him with skin and flesh, supported him with bones, tied him together with muscles and nerves, and into this lovely structure inspired an immortal soul, which was to govern and command, to regulate and guide it in all its operations; so that man stands under the greatest and most endearing circumstances of obligation to the author of his being; and therefore laying aside all considerations of himself, he ought to betake himself to an intire obedience of his will: which is not that he should barely gratify himself, or follow the motions of his wily passions, or do whatever should be dictated by his appetites; but being intrusted with talents, and having laws before him, he should make them the standard whereby to measure all his behavior, and the rule wherewith all his actions should comply.

Wherefore if you believe the existence of a God, and that you have a soul, to be continued in being to eternity; if you think that this God created you, and thereby acquired a right to be your lawful commander, and that he is of too great wisdom to be mocked, and has too much power either to be defeated or brought to terms; that he is a rewarder of them that seek him, as well as a severe animadverter on offenders; lastly, if you will not confess yourselves guilty of the vilest hypocrisy, or of the greatest folly; of the vilest hypocrisy, in disbelieving the religion you profess, or of the greatest folly, in exposing your souls to the hazard of eternal and irreparable ruin; then reflect seriously with yourselves, how necessary it is to your salvation that you be up and doing the will of your Master; and how unreasonable it is that you, being dependent creatures, should think yourselves licensed to the practice of what you please.

We all own such an obedience to our lawful king, as rescinds the power of doing what we list; and yet we presume an absolute liberty from our duty in God's service and in matters of

religion; that is to say, we acknowlege the authority of God's minister over us, while we deny his own.*

But what, I pray, is more grossly absurd than to subject ourselves to the less, and yet resist the greater power, even that from whence the less was derived?

2. The second motive is from the intrinsic beauty and loveliness of the rule itself.

I cannot conceive what should put more fervor and zeal into our devotion than the reasonableness of our religion, and the inherent lustre shining in all its laws; its precepts being worthy of the wisdom of God, and suitable to the nature of man, rectifying our reason, purifying our natures, and perfecting our understandings; its chief design being to tie us to the ravishing and unspeakable pleasures, of justice, innocence, and mercy, and to remove whatever was destructive of the order and tranquillity of society, by introducing love and kindness, and the noble principle of 'doing as,' &c. into the world. Our religion requires of us meekness and equity, charity and long sufferance, contentedness and compassion, friendship, humility, and patience, and every thing that has a real tendency to the felicity of mankind.

3. 'Let us do to others as we would have them do to us,' because both they and we bear the same stamp and impress of heaven.

For the rich and poor, the king and slave, alike resemble God, and are equal sharers of his image, having been all cast in the same mould, and made of the same materials, enjoying like bodies and equal souls, and in these the same faculties and dispositions; so that the odds between man and man are not of nature, nor founded in any essential difference in being, but the mere result of civil constitution; and that was from sin, which first put men to distinguish into proprieties, and sever into portions what nature left undivided and in common. Besides, God had given the same laws, and a like measure of ability to perform obedience, to all: so that none

* The greatest credit we can do our religion, among strangers, is to live according to its rules; and the highest honor we can give God is obedience to his commands: for obedient carriage to God argues at once his excellency and our obligation.

could pretend themselves dearlings of heaven more than others, or to have a greater share in the divine love, before that men themselves by transgressing introduced the discrimination. Wherefore since we be all alike, it is but reasonable that we sympathize with one another in our several conditions, being fellow feelers of what our brother suffers, as well as rejoicing at his prosperity.

Let me also move you to be merciful to your neighbor for God's sake, whose image he bears.

For as he who affronts the king's picture will be adjudged to have designed treason against his person, so kindness done by you to men, shall God interpret as done to himself.

4. Because if we be just and generous in time of our prosperity, it will cause a like affection in others to us.

Now seeing that the best of men are but men, and what is one man's condition may become another's; and because riches, honors, and whatever gives you pre-eminence over your mean brother, are obnoxious to change, and bottomed on unstable foundations, it will be as politic as religious to be beneficent and kind in distributing your wealth; for this very reason, that should you meet adverse fortune, the same mercy to you might be hoped for from others: whereas in the fall of a proud person, it is his greatest misery not to be pitied: so also if the cruel man comes to have his own days shortened, men believe it is the issue of justice, that he should taste of the bitterness of the sword, who therewith had made the mother childless, and surfeited himself in quaffing innocent blood.

Thus likewise the griping chuff may by common calamity or force (for else will he carry them along with him to the ground) change his bags and treasure for poverty, without raising any melancholy concern in the beholders; inasmuch as there is no cause why they should lament for his loss of that gold, with which, when in his possession, he never did good.

But contrariwise the man of bounty and generous principles, who used to deal out his bread to the needy, and disperse his riches among the indigent, who conveyed of his liberality into the remotest corners, that he might succor the comfortless, can hardly sink in his estate without the regret and sorrow of most who see or have heard of him; neither will they suffer him to starve, who was so ready to clothe the naked, and to

give food to him who was an hungry; it is cause of general grief, to behold him in prison that was always so busy in ransoming the captive; and that he should become a scorn and derision to others, who himself used to cover both the shame and infirmities of his brother.

Therefore let us carefully remember, whoever are distressed, to conceive ourselves in the same state and condition with them; and hereby having assumed their persons on us, whatsoever we would have done by our neighbors and friends in the like circumstances, the very same let us do unto them in their misery: which is true compassion; for, as I have said, seeing we are men, we must therefore consider that no human calamity is exempted from us, and thereby learn to commiserate other men in adversity, as if the like misery were already, or may be on our own persons.

5. Did we use other men as we expect or desire to be used at their hands, it would be the best and greatest security of our lives, honor, reputation, riches, and power.

For did we all as heartily wish for the preservation of these things in them, as we do in ourselves, then should we with equal pity weep over the misery of others, and with like concern defend and advance their happiness as our own; the effect of which would be a catholic love, meekness, humility, patience, amity, and universal peace spreading itself over the face of the whole earth; so advantageous is our religion to our interest, and so agreeable to our reason.

Lastly, let us be moved to this duty by the consideration of that reward, which for our obedience we shall receive of God hereafter.*

Did we but spend more thoughts on our future state, considering that as now we behave ourselves, we must inevitably live in heaven or in hell for ever, (which as I believe there is none here but doth readily acknowlege, so I wish they more

* And this is 'to make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' Luke xvi. 9. That is, so bountifully scatter your goods among the needy and indigent, that when your strength fails, God of his mercy may receive you into the heavens.

unfeignedly would consider it, and it would be enough to keep us from weighing our own and our neighbor's concernments in such differing balances) and that notwithstanding our now healthy bodies, active minds, and braving estates, we shall ere long be summoned to a strict account, it would be sufficient to make us serious in our religion, and careful in the most important affairs of our soul.

So also the consideration of the reward to be had of God hereafter, would be enough to make us bear up against the greatest reproaches and indignities wherewith men invade our reputation for being religious, and make us think it no hard exchange to part with our lives for the sake of the blessed Jesus; because the life you are to receive for it will infinitely surpass that you lay down; and it is but prudence to part with a corruptible for an incorruptible, a finite for an everlasting, a miserable for a happy state: instead of being clothed with rags, you shall put on the long white robe of Christ's righteousness; not only your tears shall be done away, but your mourning shall be changed into joy, your weeping into laughter; instead of penitential psalms you shall sing songs of deliverance; all the ravishing delights your souls are capable of, all the satisfaction which rational beings can have, you shall receive of God for evermore.

SUMMARY OF

SECOND ADDITIONAL SERMON.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. XV.—VERSE 35.

PRELIMINARY observations. Objections made against the doctrine stated. General answer to these objections first given, and probability of the resurrection pointed out. Particular answers given to the objections, which were stated against the doctrine. Remarks on identity, and on the flux continually going on in our corporeal frame, &c. Necessity of this doctrine of the resurrection to the establishment of Christian faith, and vindication of our reason in embracing it. The resurrection easily effected by the power of God. Encouragements to us proceeding from this doctrine. 1. To run our Christian course with patience and resolution. 2. To pay the greatest possible measure of gratitude and thanksgiving to our blessed Saviour, who has done so much for us who deserved so little. 3. To lead a life strictly suitable to the certainty of the doctrine itself. Animadversion on a great error committed by some, who suppose that there will be a resurrection for the good, but not for the wicked. Conclusion.

SECOND ADDITIONAL SERMON.

RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. XV.—VERSE 35.

But some man will say, how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

THE words of the text are an objection which the subtilty of man, or malice of the devil, had started among some backsliding Christians, to fasten them in their unbelief, and to confirm them in that fond principle, that there was no resurrection.

'But some man will say,' &c.

That is, say they, seeing that this our carcass, when once bereft of life, will not only consume away in rottenness and stench, but yield up all its beauty to corruption, melting away by degrees and mouldering into dust; how is it possible that such a body should be ever again restored to its former state and condition?

This I take to be the full scope of what is objected, as will in due time appear from the Apostle's pertinent and most apposite answer: but here in this place I think it not amiss to take notice of some other difficulties, urged against the doctrine of the resurrection by some of the daring, conceited wits of the age; and after that, in order, give some concise refutations of them all.

1. It is objected that some bodies are torn in pieces by wild beasts; others pickled in the sea are portioned out to fishes; or falling under the merciless rage of fire, are either evaporated into smoke or calcined into ashes, whilst these ashes are per-

haps by some tyrant scattered to the wanton wind, as Tiberius served the relics of his two nephews; to collect which seems a much more difficult task than to retrieve and muster up each particle dissipated only within the compass of a grave.

2. What intelligible account can be given respecting the Anthropophagi, that feed on man's flesh; and whose bodies are as it were builded up out of the ruins of others? At the resurrection, how shall one body serve two; much less more men?

3. Why should we assert the identity of the body in the resurrection, when it is never here the same? since, as some parts in this our fleshly cottage are continually wasting, other new ones daily succeed into their room: *πάντα ῥεῖ, κ' οὐδὲν μένει·* there is a perpetual flux of parts, and never one durance in the same stated condition; therefore it seems unreasonable that an old man's body should be punished in the other world for those youthful sins of which this carcass was never guilty.

All these, and the like subtile disputes of the scoffing atheist, may well be cut off at once with the sharp return of the Apostle, *ἄφρον*—'thou fool;' for it tastes of the greatest imaginable folly to cavil about a thing which is proved certainly to be so, only because we cannot explain how it is so: he that expects a demonstration *τοῦ διότι*, an account of the manner, and why the thing is, before he will yield his belief, must banish most truths and beings out of the world. Although a man performs all the actions of a common animal, and besides that, thinks, speaks, disputes, and reasons on sublime notions, yet we may defy the most ripe-witted pretender to tell how these noble effects are produced by the soul; or if he smiles at the term soul, let him clearly show how it is any way possible for the body to do it alone, by all the powers and laws of mere matter and motion: nevertheless, if he be not quite forsaken of his reason, he will grant that he lives, and is conscious of the reality of these effects; the mode or manner whereof is without the reach of his capacity clearly to explain. Who is there, that according to the most rational hypothesis extant can so solve any phenomenon in nature, as that his solution

shall not be liable to dispute at least, if not charged with inconsistences? Motion, time, and place, are things obvious to the sense and apprehension of the vulgar; and yet their natures and proportions have confounded the brains of the most considering philosophers in all ages, and must be reckoned among the intricate *ænigmata* reserved for the coming of the great Elijah.

Now if, in most of these ordinary things which we own to be brought to pass by mean and limited causes, (where we have a full demonstration τοῦ ὅτι, that they are,) we ought in reason to be satisfied, notwithstanding we cannot unfold and discover the mode of them; how much more ought we in the notions of a creation, or resurrection, where not the activity of a finite soul, or the casual or uncertain jumblings of matter are concerned, but the unlimited and immense power of the Almighty God?

His power and wisdom are both infinite; and their ways and methods must be so too; it is as vain for man to think or desire, with his contracted and narrow faculties, to comprehend the infinite manner of God's exerting his power, as to endeavor to encompass the whole earthly globe within his arms: and therefore St. Paul does not go about to satisfy the curiosity of this fool, and to tell him exactly the manner of the resurrection; which I have now demonstrated to be impossible, on account of God's infinity. Nay, if it be impossible that flesh and blood should inherit the kingdom of heaven, (if the words are to be taken literally, as some learned men judge they are) it was not to be granted that man, so long as he continues united to matter, could conceive the glory of incorruption; so that I am almost persuaded that this is the mere reason why it is no where in Scripture revealed what or how we shall be, because pure flesh and blood is not able to understand it: wherefore St. Paul, that I may not seem to put you off any longer with a plausibility only, and leave the former difficulties wholly unanswered, though he was caught up into paradise, and had a glimpse of its glory, yet tells us no more but that he heard ἄῤῥητα ῥήματα, unspeakable words, which it was not possible or lawful for man to utter: and here, in this place, though he had the fairest occasion offered imaginable to tell

us how and with what bodies the dead are raised up, he voluntarily waives the discourse as too sublime; yet clearly satisfies the first objection by parity of reason; with which modest but approved and ingenious way I shall endeavor to answer all the rest.

1. What reason then is there why it should seem so incredible a thing that the body, when putrefied and corrupted, should again be revived; being that we see a thousand instances of this daily in the common productions of nature? Every grain of corn putrefies, and admits almost a perfect dissolution among its parts in the womb of the earth; and yet after all this alteration, it sprouts out into a blade, and then brings forth a body such as was sown, and proper to its kind. And indeed the manner of the production of all animals seems as inexplicable as that of the resurrection of the human body. How have the curious inquirers into the mysteries of nature been puzzled in assigning the immediate cause of the formation of the fœtus! What, out of a rude indigested mass of matter, should so sagaciously shape every limb, and with so great exactness justly proportion every part? Some speak of we know not what spirit of the world, as mysterious and unintelligible as the thing itself; others of as blind a principle, the plastic power of the soul; and some offer a solution from a ferment in the small particles of matter, obeying the laws of motion and impulse; which, though it seem most plain and facile to the apprehension, yet may be urged by inconveniencies for which we shall not easily find an answer. Now, though men can never agree as to the positive cause, or the method of these productions, yet all acknowlege that they are frequently done; all come to pass by the ordinary powers of nature; insomuch that we have no reason to doubt of a like result in the resurrection; which is the immediate work, not of secondary causes, but of God himself.

2. The second difficulty mentioned was, how all the particles, once totally dispersed and dissipated, should ever be recalled from their remote cells, and again marshalled in their former array? For the solution of which, we shall follow the example of the Apostle; and searching into the history of nature, see if she have no similitude or analogy to this divine truth.

What is more common than to dissolve gold and silver in their proper liquors? and yet when those opaque bodies are so wonderfully diffused, that they become transparent and quite vanish out of our sight, any inferior chymist, by many easy means, can recall them again into a mass, not losing the least particle. And why should it seem a thing incredible for the divine power to recall all the wandering and scattered parcels of a man's body, when we see how faithfully the small filings of iron obey the summons of the load-stone? whether they were straying on the ground, or drowned in the water, or cast into the air, nay buried in a heap of dust, they start out of their graves at its approach! But that we may enter yet into a larger sphere, how infinite are the stories we might recount of sympathy! What remarkable effects and feats will bodies at vast distances work on one another! what more strange, than the direction and variation of the needle, once touched with the magnet? that virtue, or those particles, (call it as you please,) that equally charm it to north or south, must come a great journey to execute their charge. But if all these effects are done by the common principles of nature, shall not the grand Author of nature, that prescribed these very motions and laws to singular bodies at their creation, be able by an equal power to determine each particle in my body, though never so remote, to meet its fellows? If, as the ingenious atomical hypothesis expresses it, all the frisks in nature are wrought only from a bare congruity in mode and figure, which some parts of matter have with these, and not with those, and by consequence can more easily skip into the pores of these bodies than others, and be united with them; why should we despair that the least parts in our bodies, which now are friends and well agree, should in the resurrection again be united by the same congruity; especially since there will be an all-seeing eye to control them?

3. Now in the third place, as to our cannibals and Anthropophagi, I think I may with confidence assert that there never were a people who ate man's flesh, as their sole and constant diet: the stories of the fabulous Pliny mention, indeed, some that were man-eaters, as the Cyclopes and Lestrigones, and some of the Scythians; but it is probable that, being a warlike

people, they were called Anthropophagi only from their fierceness and merciless carriage towards their own species; just as the Arimaspi were said, by him and other authors, to have but one eye in their foreheads, when their being excellent archers, and their winking with one eye, gave the only ground for the fable. As for some inhabitants of America, the same discoverers who tell us they did eat man's flesh, tell us likewise that they had varieties of other food: if it were only their naize-facca* bread, it will be enough for our purpose: nay, I think it demonstratively impossible that such vast numbers of people (scarce any place being uninhabited) should only be sustained by man's flesh; therefore what was eaten among them was rather on some special occasion, than constantly, as the intombing a dear relation in their own bowels; or perhaps, as Juvenal reports of the superstitious Ægyptians, after a conquest they might pursue their fury on the carcases of the dead; or as by him is also said of the Vascones, when driven to extremity some way, as in a siege, they might break the common bonds of humanity.

However, that we may not seem in the least to be afraid of this formidable argument, I shall grant it as a very truth, that some people have from their very birth lived only on man's flesh, to a full stature. Now if we show it manifestly possible in such a case, that not one particle of the bodies devoured need go to the making of the body of him that eats them, I shall leave ground enough for God's power in the resurrection, and by consequence for my faith.

Nourishment, by consent of all physicians, is made by additions of very little and insensible particles; and that seems to be the meaning of great Hippocrates' aphorism, Lib. ii. Aph. 11. ῥᾶον πληροῦσθαι ποτοῦ, ἢ σιτίου· πληροῦσθαι, that is, *refici*, *recreari*, as it is expounded by Heurnius and others, to this sense, that liquids are easier converted into nourishment than more solid food, because consisting of more subtile parts: now since all men require meat as well as drink, according to the principles of both philosophies, especially the new, why may not the parts of that drink, mixed with the solid meat, receive

* Thus it is written in the Ms.; but what *Naize-facca* bread is, I am unable to learn.—Ed.

such modifications and qualities, as may fit some of them to nourish any part, so that the grosser food may serve only as a sieve, or rather as a mill, to extenuate them into their first atoms or elements, and by consequence put them into a capacity to make up any part, either flesh or bone? and hence perhaps it may be that the body consumes and wastes in diabetes, when the liquids pass out uncocted or unaltered, as Riverius and others observe.

But that I may not seem to maintain a perfect paradox, I shall briefly recount to you this one experiment of a learned Author, (Helmont. til. complex. atque elementalium mixt. figm. 5. 30.) which, being of another nature, may not be so proper for this place; nevertheless, I believe it will serve well to illustrate our assertion.

A small tree of five pounds weight was set in two hundred pounds of dried earth; and having been watered constantly for five years, was then taken up, when it weighed above an hundred and sixty pounds; but the earth in which it grew had not lost full two ounces of its weight.

Now if water only, strained through the earth, can produce a tree, why may not any drink do the like as to the body? especially if we look on a peculiar guidance of providence all along to accompany the action.

And as to the difficulty which many make as an appendix to this third objection, (where you are to take notice that the proving the thing but possible will quite destroy this objection,) that there have been, or in time may be, more bodies of men to be raised than the whole globe of the earth will equal; I think it seems but a very frivolous instance, if we consider that there is no necessity at all for the parts of bodies deceased to be confined only to this earth, and by consequence from thence again to be received; since the far greater part do manifestly expire into the air.

4. That there is an identity of body to be expected and believed, is manifest from the Apostle's words: he tells us expressly, ver. 53. 'this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.'

Surely, perfectly another body, whether fantastical or philosophical, cannot be said properly to be *τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο, τὸ*

θνητὸν τοῦτο, this very corruptible, this very mortal body: neither let this identity seem a thing either strange or impossible: the matter will be plain, if we once settle the right notion of identity, or when we may truly call a thing the same.

In a common and vulgar sense then, a thing is truly the same when most of the essential parts remain unchanged, or as many of those are left as denominate the thing this or that being: therefore a river is called the same, not from the water, but from the channel; and so long as that remains, we call it the same river, though the greater part of the water be dried up: for identity must arise from something permanent (call it form or what you please; form by Aristotle is defined λόγος τῆς οὐσίας, from which form proceeds identity) even in things successive or transitory in their parts; and so we say it is the same commonwealth, whilst the laws and polity, the principal denominations of it remain unaltered, notwithstanding all its administrators have been buried over and over: for both in these successive, and in permanent beings, there is a plain distinction between ἀλλοῖον and ἄλλο, altered, or changed and clear another thing. A building repaired, or newly beautified with paint, is altered indeed, but still the same house; and thus the body of man, though it becomes corpulent or lean, nay though it be maimed to the loss of a limb or two, yet as long as the principal members remain intire, is called the same body, as Æneas said of Hector,

> —— quantum mutatus ab illo
> Hectore!

Aristotle surely intimated substantial form as the only principle of identity, when he defined it, λόγος ὁτοῦ τί ἦν εἶναι, the ground from whence a thing is what it was: but if we would speak in a strict philosophical sense, numerical identity depends on the same individual for matter as well as form; and from this notion is the objection started, that though there be, perhaps, in a man the same form both inward and outward, yet the matter of his body continually suffers a flux and change; and by consequence he will not, at thirty years of age have one dust of what he at first brought into the world, and therefore his body is not the same: to which it may be an-

swered, that all the constitutive and denominating parts, from the cradle till we arrive at our full growth, remain the same, only suffering such additions as can no way destroy their identity; as a ball of snow, that by rolling swells to twice the former bigness, is still the same; it having all it had at first, albeit there is an accession of as much more. If there was not this identity, how comes it that scars and maiming of limbs, or shrinking of sinews, or especially crookedness of any bone, or the like, happening to us in our infancy, should so surely attend us to the grave, notwithstanding we may have had above half an age to outgrow or shake it off? If every part daily decays and is daily renewed, the greatest deformity need not despair; nor ought the most admirable features to grow proud; for a little time might easily make there an angel, and here a monkey: but that I may say no more, the very fracture of a bone seems to put the thing beyond dispute; for if every piece of it were changed in the space of ten or twenty years, the glassy cement which knitted the broken shivers together, would in that time be quite worn out; whereas in skeletons learned anatomists tell us they have more than once observed the contrary: the change therefore which is daily wrought in our body, is not in any thing which may properly be called its parts, if we will stand to its definition given by the soberest philosophers: they are but humors and spirits, fat and blood, and the like, wherein our greatest alterations consist; all which are no more strictly to be esteemed parts than our meat or drink newly received, or turned to excrement: therefore to say there will be an identity of body in the resurrection implies thus much, that all which is then properly its part, when it dies, shall be again restored in the latter day. Neither ought this to seem strange to any one who shall reflect on that wonderful and celebrated experiment, the proper emblem of a resurrection, recorded by many learned authors, and practicable enough among us; I mean Hermes's tree, or the philosophical plant, when an intire vegetable reduced into dust and ashes is again resuscitated to all its pristine proportions and similitude, and may in a strict sense be truly called the same plant, in as much as the very same parts which were calcined, are again numerically reformed after the same manner. Therefore, that I may conclude

in the words of a learned author, (Dr. Browne, Rel. Med.) what the art of man can do in these inferior pieces, what blasphemy is it to affirm the finger of God cannot do in those more perfect and sensible structures!*

In this discourse I have all along followed the Apostle's example, in making use of instances only from the book of nature; for those alone must needs be sufficient to satisfy any reasonable ingenious man, if he but considers that they are the common effects of natural causes, whilst the whole business of the resurrection is committed to the power of God. Hitherto we have been concerned in rescuing and asserting the possibility of the resurrection of the body, in such manner as the Scripture expresses it, from the most remarkable exceptions made against it; now with like ease might be shown the necessity of the resurrection, both that our faith may appear reasonable, and the Christian religion be advantageous to its followers: for did man die like a beast, and his soul perish when his body was dissolved; were his being and existence to cease with this life, nor he possessed with the belief of any thing after it; then certainly would our faith be vain and groundless; our religion fond and romantic; and we most indiscreet in our choice, and unhappy in our end: 'for if in this life we only have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable;' (1 Cor. xv. 19.) inasmuch as God's promises and all our hopes are bottomed on the resurrection, as their only basis and foundation. And methinks there should not be the least appearance of reason why we should scruple the certainty thereof, did we but observe the two infallible supporters of our belief, God's omnipotence, and our Saviour's example: now if the resurrection, neither in respect of God nor us, implies a contradiction, then it is possible for his power to effect it; and whatever is possible is easy with him; for difficulty proceeds from want of power, which want can find no place in omnipotence: but that the resurrection is possible appears from our Saviour's example, who is already risen.

* 1 Cor. xv. 12. 'Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?'

Wherefore, 1. this should highly encourage us to run our Christian race with constancy and resolution. If our afflictions be sharp, and such as are contrary to flesh and blood, we should both consider that they will be momentary, and meditate on the large recompenses which God has designed us for doing our duty; large, in respect of their duration, for they shall be endless; 'the righteous shall go into life everlasting;' large, if you regard their quality and intenseness, 'such as eye hath not seen, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive.' If the unkindly assaults of malice and envy be so violent as to seem unsupportable, we may reflect on God's promise, (and what he has promised will certainly be, because truth is his inseparable attribute,) that 'he will not suffer us to be afflicted above what we are able.'

2. This should engage us to pay the greatest measure of thanksgiving and gratitude to our Saviour, for having done so much for us who deserved so little. The excellency of the Christian religion above the heathen philosophy consists in this; that it has not only given more clear and distinct notices of virtue and natural laws, but also powerfully enforced our submission thereunto, in having promised rewards to our obedience, and threatened severely to punish our neglect: for though it be true that virtue is a recompense to itself, and that we cannot conceive what should put more fervor into our zeal and flame into our devotion, than the reasonableness of our religion, and the inherent lustre shining in all its laws; (its precepts being worthy of the wisdom of God, and suitable to the nature of man, rectifying our reason, purifying our natures, and perfecting our understandings;) yet since our nature is corrupted, and our body so closely united to the soul, it does by reason of that union, if not fatally determine, at least so strongly incline our will to comply with its brutish motions, that were there no resurrection, no heaven nor hell, no reward for virtue or punishment for vice, it would be highly probable that we should be very slack and languid in our pursuance of goodness and piety, seldom embracing virtue but when our bodies by sickness or age were indisposed to vice.

Wherefore, for as much as our blessed Saviour, neither al-

lured with hopes of advantage, (for his perfections were already infinite,) nor affrighted by fear of punishment, (for he had all power under him,) but chiefly through his own goodness and free love to man, did debase himself by taking the manhood into God, did humble himself to live among us, having been vested not only with our flesh, but with all the frailties and infirmities of human nature except sin, (for he was exposed to hunger and cold, poverty and nakedness, grief and pain, calumny and reproaches, contempt and infamy, and at length to the bitter pains of a cruel death,) after which he rose again on the third day, the great intendment and design of all which was, to inspire men with real holiness and purity by his doctrine, and by his exemplary life powerfully to engage their affections to the practice and observation of the doctrine he delivered; for as much as in his death he expiated our sins, satisfying God for us, suffering what we ought to have undergone, (since 'by his stripes are we made whole,') and by his resurrection on this day completed all the rest, thereby proving the truth of his mission from the Father and of his doctrine, and thus confirmed our faith, exempted our scruples, fixed and settled our hopes, in going before to prepare a place for us; the consideration of all this, I say, should excite in us the greatest reverence of his power, and imprint on our souls the deepest resentment of his mercy, seeing that our gratitude to him can never be too great, nor our expressions of it.

Lastly, reflection on the certainty of the resurrection should lay a strict tie on us to lead a life suitable thereunto; which chiefly consists in the mortification of our lusts, the subduing our passions, and overcoming our unruly appetites, by making them all conform to reason and grace, and in walking humbly before God, being just and honest with man, and preserving ourselves from the alloys of the flesh and temptations of Satan, by the exercise of all Christian virtues; which will be best done by striving to make our behavior agree and conform unto the example of the holy Jesus.

Before I conclude, it may be necessary to animadvert on a great error lately crept into the minds, not only of many ignorant, but of some learned men; they mistaking such passages as

these: (John vi. 40.) 'him that believeth on the Son of man will I raise up at the last day;' and (Luke xx. 35.) 'they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection;' also that of St. Paul (Phil. iii. 11.) 'if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.' From these and the like places, they have fallen into that θεῖον δόγμα of Epicurus recorded by Plutarch, that sweet principle of dissolute men, that the righteous indeed may partake of another life after death, but the wicked need have no concern when once huddled into dust, since annihilation, or eternal imprisonment in the grave, is their sentence. And that this notion may appear more plausible, there is another sect of men, who, contemplating the love and goodness of God, cannot allow that he should punish a finite creature with such a disproportionate mulct as eternal misery; and therefore, say the former, they shall not be at all hereafter, who die in their sins: but it must be answered that these men little consider that the God, against whose command we sin, is infinite; that the mercy and goodness which we abuse, are so also; and that with regard to his laws, as they set out infinite punishment to the transgressor, so there is by them allowed infinite reward to the performer; and it is made perfectly matter of our choice under his covenant to take the right side or the wrong: wherefore if we will freely and by election precipitate ourselves into the bottomless gulf, *volenti non fit injuria;* our damnation is of ourselves, and therefore most just.

But in farther reply to both these extravagant conceits, I shall urge St. John against the first; 'the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation: (St. John v. 28. 29.) And as for the latter, St. Matthew tells us how all shall speed; 'the wicked shall go away εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, and the righteous εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον:' the very same word that here is used to express the eternity of the righteous man's happiness, is also used to signify the eternal torments of the wicked. Indeed it was the very end of Christ's coming, to fulfil the word of God; by which is understood his

threatnings of judgment, as well as his promises of mercy: and his kingdom and government is established, by punishing the wicked, as well as by rewarding the just; and therefore both shall so far partake of the power of Christ's death and resurrection, as to be brought again to life and being; that is, to a capacity of receiving his final sentence.

SUMMARY OF

THIRD ADDITIONAL SERMON.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSE 16.

PRELIMINARY observations on the effects of a good and bad example, &c.: words of the text explained: manner of treating it laid down.

I. It is first considered when properly our light may be said to shine before men, viz. when by all the actions of our lives we make it apparent to the world that we are Christians in deed and in earnest; when our works and actions accord with the profession of our faith, &c. This topic enlarged on, and the exercise of Christian virtues pointed out and recommended.

II. Occasion is hence taken to detect those several sorts of hypocrites or impostors, who pretend to be great lights, when they are quite the contrary. The presumption of such persons is shown to arise, 1. from pride; or, 2. from a froward, cross-grained disposition; or, 3. from a distempered state of body and species of melancholy, which inclines them to a dismal apprehension of things, and renders them the vassals of Superstition rather than the servants of Religion.

III. Another sort of men are next considered; very different from the foregoing, but yet subject to blame, who might be, and yet are not lights to the world; who live virtuously and do many good actions, but to avoid the fault of vain-glory, run into the contrary extreme, and deprive those good actions of that influence on others which they ought to have.

IV. The good effects of an exemplary life are considered, 1. in the conversion of our brethren; 2. in the exaltation of God's glory; 3. in the great benefits and advantages which thence accrue to ourselves. Concluding observations.

THIRD ADDITIONAL SERMON.

ON THE EXHIBITION OF GOOD WORKS.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSE 16.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven.

An example, be it good or bad, is the most effectual oratory and prevailing rhetoric, whereby to gain proselytes to our actions and opinions. I put them both together; for as much as it is almost impossible to conceive how we should reconcile any person to one without the other; since men's actions are generally the rules whereby we judge and guess at their opinions: they do mutually depend on, and beget one another; and though most commonly it is the preceding opinion of the good, or satisfaction and pleasure of this or the other action, which makes us put it in execution; yet it often happens that actions, done at first perhaps inconsiderately and rashly, without our seriously setting ourselves to consider the issue and event, and these actions often repeated, do at length beget opinions in us which we never dreamt of before, but which it is now necessary to maintain as some seeming justification of our past actions, or at least as that which renders them more tolerable and excusable to our imaginations than they would appear if tried and judged only by those sentiments of things, by those notions of good and evil, or of laudable and unworthy actions, which we entertained before the commission of them. Which if it be true, it is obvious to any man's conception to comprehend how much the welfare and happiness, or the

misery and unhappy estate of a very considerable part of the universe may depend on him, as far I mean as every man's acquaintance or consideration reaches; a reflexion than which there is not any that can be a greater encouragement to a virtuous and well-ordered life, or a greater determent from that which is vicious and disorderly. For as the pleasures of benevolence are infinite and unspeakable, as there is nothing which can leave the mind of man in a more calm, serene, and satisfied frame or temper, than the consideration of that good which he has done to another, in reference either to his spiritual or temporal condition; so doubtless, if ever a man be awakened to a true sense of things, to understand the unreasonableness or disagreeableness of his past actions with reason and religion, nothing will be a greater torture to his mind, or a more intolerable weight on his spirits, than the reflecting on that evil, (either as regards this life or another) to which by his wicked and debauched example, or by his unmerciful and uncompassionate heart, he has reduced those who are possibly cursing the hour of so unhappy an acquaintaince, and the day that proclaimed him heir to a large unprofitable estate.

The words which we have read in the text are part of our Saviour's excellent Sermon on the Mount, sufficiently confirming us in the truth of what hath been already said, and encouraging us in the practice of it; first, by his positive command in the beginning of the words to give a holy and blameless example; 'let your light shine before men:' secondly, from that prerogative or honor which will accrue to us thereby, in that we do in some measure tend to the exalting of God's glory; 'that they may see your good works,' and thus being provoked by the example of righteousness and holiness, may by the performance of the same acts themselves, 'glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

For the better understanding of these words, we shall endeavor to manifest, first, what is meant by the former part of them, or when any one can properly be said to have his light shining before men, or to be a light shining to men. Secondly; taking occasion from thence, we shall detect those several sorts of impostors in the world, who pretend to be great lights, when really they be not so, but quite the contrary; as also we shall

here evidence what it is that gives occasion to their presumption. Thirdly, we shall likewise show the contrary mistake of others, who for fear of really being, or of being accounted vain-glorious, do almost utterly abandon in public all laudable and commendable actions; by which means one grand design of them wholly perishes and is lost; to wit, their influence on the minds of others. Fourthly, and lastly, we shall dilate on what will be the effects of our light shining before men; to wit, the conversion of our brethren from a state of darkness and ignorance to one of light and knowlege; from a state of sin and wickedness to one of a holy and godlike conversation; and lastly from an estate of misery and destruction, whither in all probability they are now running, to an estate of happiness and tranquillity, to uninterrupted pleasures and unbounded joys at God's right hand for evermore: nor shall we advantage our neighbor only, but ourselves also; for God will account himself honored by this piece of service which we shall do for him, and will undoubtedly and infallibly reward us.

I. As to the first of these heads, when properly our light may be said to shine before men, I answer generally, that then it is, when by all the actions of our lives we make it apparent to the world that we are Christians in deed and in earnest; that we have not taken a profession of Christianity on us, either that it may conciliate to us a tolerable esteem and good liking among the rest of our neighbors, or that we may be accounted orthodox in our tenets and opinions, or that it may tend to the preserving and improving our temporal riches and estates, or for any other sinister design whatsoever; but then only, when after being fully convinced in our minds of the truth and certainty, of the purity, excellence, aud reasonableness of the religion we profess, from the power of God so eminently manifested in its introduction into the world, from the signs and miracles afterwards attending it for its preservation and establishment, as also from the precepts and injunctions which it imposes, so agreeable to the mind of every man that is not perfectly sunk into an estate of brutishness, so becoming the great lawgiver in his dealings with his offspring, so representing him as not to beget foolish and superstitious fears in our minds, but a masculine, free, and generous compliance with his will and commands;

so highly maintaining his grandeur and majesty, and so powerfully influencing our reverence and adoration; when, I say, being convinced by such considerations as these only, and not making any veils or covers of hypocrisy, we so act that the whole sense of our actions may speak nothing else to the world but the true thoughts and real sentiments of our minds.

That our light therefore may be said truly to shine before men, it is not enough that we make our constant appearance in the assembly of God's people, or that we there make a profession of the Christian faith; that we profess to renounce the devil and all his works; that we partake, with the rest of the congregation, of the holy communion; nor, to go farther, that we stand on defence of our Christian religion against all opposers and gainsayers; that we plead hard, and sweat ourselves into an holy zeal and anger against Jew or Infidel: these ought to be done, but the other parts of our duty ought not to be left undone; neither are these sufficient to make our light shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in heaven: for if we do these things only, do not even the publicans and pharisees the same? What do we more than they? and we can no faster bring heathen and strangers into a good opinion or esteem of our faith and religious worship by these actions only, than they will be taught to contemn and despise it again by those who perform the same actions with ourselves, without having any farther respect to the more positive, weighty, and fundamental commands of God, as the exercise of justice and righteousness; of charity, love, and benignity; of meekness, patience, and humility; of self-denial, purity, chastity, and other such-like Christian virtues.

We can no sooner bring any to think so well of our faith, as to glorify our father which is in heaven, but they will be taught by those who are hypocrites in our religion, to look on our God as a mock Deity only, whom we worship for no other end than our interest among men, for no other cause than that of our education, or it may be sometimes our divertisement; by those, I say, who satisfy themselves with a form of godliness whilst they deny the power thereof.

He, then, that would be a true Christian, such as our Saviour would have us to be, who would have his light to shine before

men, and bring them to embrace the same effectual faith with himself, and to glorify his heavenly father, let his example go farther than the exercise of those things which to him may be of pride or ostentation only, or which he can do without danger of hazarding the smallest interest, without defraying one mite towards the relief of the necessitous, without bestowing one crumb to satisfy the craving of an hungry stomach, or one drop to allay the thirst of the scorched traveller, without contributing any small benevolence towards the clothing of the naked, the relieving of the miserable captive from his intolerable yoke, or the prisoner from his cloister more infectious than the chamber of death; which he can do without laying any restraint on his unruly appetites, without denying himself the satisfaction of any lust and passion, without patience and submission under the dispensation of God's providence, or without any more love and charity to his neighbor than what proceeds from that which he bears to himself.

If we would be true Caristians, and such as may be instrumental to make others so too, we must rise a degree higher; our works and actions must profess our religion, and not a bare profession serve the turn of both. Let us then exercise all those Christian virtues, on all occasions, which either the rebellion of our passions, the extravagancy of our desires, a prosperous or an afflicted estate, the necessity of others; in a word, which any part of our duty towards God, our neighbor, or ourselves, calls for at our hands. Have we a fair opportunity of making any unjust advantage on another, without danger of being discovered, or of hazarding our credit and reputation, prevailing on his ignorance and despicable estate in the world, by our policy, might, and interest? then by the exercise of justice and honesty, do we cause our light to shine before men.

Do we embrace all opportunities, which our own circumstances will permit us to do, with prudence and discretion, of relieving and supplying the wants of those who are in a worse condition than ourselves? then do our good works appear, in our tender pity and compassion to the exigencies of mankind. Are we at any time oppressed with grievous sickness, pain, and torture of the body, or with any other afflic-

tion; and do we, as much as our extremity will permit, patiently undergo burdens; desire, as much as in us lies, perfectly to resign our wills to the will of God, and to improve all the incommodities of our bodies to our spiritual advantage? Then do we give a true and faithful testimony to the religion we profess.

In a word, are we provoked to anger and wrath, and do we exercise gentleness, meekness, and longsuffering? are we excited to inordinate and lawless lusts, and do we exercise the graces of modesty, purity, and chastity? are we tempted to covetousness and avarice, and do we yet bestow our alms and benevolence? do we requite bad turns with good? do we desire the prosperity of those that wish us evil? do we pray for those that curse us? do we love our enemies, and are we in charity with all men? Then do we glorify our Father which is in heaven. These are the Christian virtues, all of which every man in some degree, higher or lower, is capable of being endued with: for it would be altogether contrary to the goodness and justice of God to require the performance of any thing as necessary to the salvation of all men in general, if he had not capacitated all men to such performance: the poor man therefore, as well as the rich, may live virtuously and submissively to the will of God, may deny himself and subdue his unruly affections, may be as charitable as the rich man is, if his mind be but as well disposed, supposing that his stock were but as large and his estate as plentiful: these I say are the virtues in which if we are conspicuous, then may our light be said to shine before men.

There is yet one thing more, wherein our light may properly be said to shine before men; for which indeed all men may not seem universally capacitated, in respect of their neighbors, when we consider the distance between them in estate and condition, and the dependance of one on another; yet every man may and ought to do it, as he shall find occasion, to those of the same rank and condition with himself; and which, if so done, will have the same effect, as if every man should freely assume the liberty to undertake it without any respect to the condition of persons; I mean the advising and reproving others in so meek, courteous, and friendly a manner,

that the person thus reproved may not have the least cause to suspect that the person reprehending him rejoices in the occasion, or has any design of extolling himself and magnifying his own righteousness; but may suppose that whatever he does proceeds merely from his good-will and charity, desiring to reduce his brother from that which he knows to be evil, as he desires others should deal with him, were he himself going on in any evil way, through ignorance, or the misgovernance of his passions. Example and advice are in this case very great helps to each other: and as it is impossible, or in the highest degree improbable, that our advice should be at all effectual, if we ourselves contradict it in our example, life, and actions; so neither will our example have as good an effect as it might, unless our advice be adjoined thereunto. For some possibly there may be so ignorant, that though they see our good actions and approve well of them, yet will they question whether they are so much concerned, or whether they have the same reason to follow us in them, as we have to do them. Others possibly there are, who, for want oftentimes of a kind reproof from persons they converse with, are at length persuaded to believe that they needed it not; and though, peradventure, what they may have done was not altogether commendable, yet doubtless they thought it was very excusable, since it passed, as they supposed, uncontrolable in the judgment of sober persons; who however had only too much bashfulness, or it may be cowardice, which permitted them not openly to condemn it. So that another way in which we may manifest our light to the world, is the adjoining to a holy life and pious example, wholesome counsel and good advice, in a meek, friendly, and submissive manner; by which means if we shall persuade any one, who is but a professed Christian, to be so indeed, or shall convert him, who is a stranger, to Christianity, our light will so shine before men, that they, and we in them, shall glorify our Father which is in heaven.

II. We come now to the second thing we propounded as the subject of this discourse; which was to show the error and mistake, and let me add the dangerous condition too, of a sort of men, who, like those hypocrites whom our Saviour describes in the 6th chapter of this gospel, make a mighty noise and

bustle in the world, love to pray standing in the synagogues and in corners of the streets, to be of a sad countenance, and to disfigure their faces, to make long prayers though to no purpose, to give alms even to the undoing of themselves and families, at such a time when they can have all the world to be spectators, and who, for these reasons, think themselves to be the only true lights which God has sent into the world, to be the only fit persons to teach and instruct his people, though they themselves are most commonly very ignorant and illiterate, many of them not able to give a true account of any one article in the Christian faith, or a just and full exposition of any verse in the whole bible.

Now the religion of these men generally proceeds either from pride; or from a froward cross-grained nature and disposition; or lastly, from such a vitiated temper of body and sort of melancholy, as disposes them to solitariness and retiredness, to black and dismal apprehensions of things, and to that which they call by the name of religion, being strongly persuaded that they alone understand wherein true religion consists, though in very deed they are not servants to religion, but slaves and vassals to superstition. We shall consider these three causes whereby such people as we now reprehend are moved to act, separately and by themselves; to wit, pride; a froward, peevish, and cross-grained disposition; and natural temper, or that which we call religious melancholy; and we shall show that whoever acts or is guided only by any one of these principles, as to his religion, is so far from being a light before men, so unlikely to propagate the doctrine and precepts of our Saviour in persuading any to submit to its governance and direction, that he acts quite contrarily, and, as much as in him lies, renders the gospel of Christ despicable or contemptible, and dishonors our Father which is in heaven.

1. The first mover then to these men's religion, I say, may be pride; which is generally most prevalent in those who have something of wit and natural parts, whereby they can more imperiously, and it may be, more persuasively dictate, than the rest of their neighbors. Now pride being a passion which easily and naturally springs up in every man, where there is any thing more than ordinary to give it fuel and maintain it,

and there being hardly any one who does not think that he excels in something or other, by how much a man fancies himself fitted for a higher employment, by so much generally is his pride advanced, which will not suffer him to be at rest, till he falls to action, and has given proof of his abilities. Religion therefore being a thing, which (though too little practised) bears a good name, receiving respect and honor almost from every man's profession, and which is really accounted of highly and esteemed by a great many; a man may take as much pride in appearing outwardly a promoter of religion, as he does in honors and preferments, in wealth and increase, in wit and beauty, or any of those things in the enjoyment of which we generally account ourselves happy. Let us suppose then that a man, who generally converses with such people as have not so large a reach as himself, who is able to talk eloquently and passionately, and is very well acquainted with his own abilities, finds the people among whom he lives very willingly disposed to some religion or other, but generally to that of their country, and who possibly have many frightful objections (too many now to name) against the person that is set over them to instruct them; supposing this, I say, what a fair opportunity has such a man of being presently cried up for an oracle! and how must his spirits needs be exalted, to see all the people depending on his mouth, whilst he talks mysteries and revelations, wholly unintelligible, and which his auditors believe (quite contrary to the method of rational men's faith) only because they understand them not, and his confidence pronounces them boldly! But such a person as this, being one of the few to whom we may allow a good competent measure of wit, whilst a very little judgment serves his turn, though, when he first entered into the service, he did not profess the Christian religion from any excellency which he believed to be in it more than any other, but only because he knew that others did; though he cared not to convert any to the belief of the gospel, but that he might have the honor and credit of overpersuading them; though thus he stood affected at first, yet possibly in a considerable time, being put oftentimes to make some search into what he dictates, that he may do it the more plausibly; such person, I say, through that little reason which he has, may at

length be convinced that there is something of reality, more than he dreamt of, in that religion which he professes. If this should occur, he in the next place concludes on his inspiration, makes no doubt but he was called from heaven, and grows ten times more proud and insolent than he was before. Never certainly was there such a light as he is like to prove; never such a divine revelation; never such an extraordinary manifestation of God's grace to a human creature; so that at last he grows perfectly mad with his conceitedness and folly, and will allow no man in the world, besides himself, the privilege of performing any service to God, in the reformation of his creatures, and in rendering their wills, by a due prescription of his laws and commandments, pliable and comformable thereto.

Such persons as these, I say, do falsely pretend to have their light shining before men; and whilst in appearance they would seem to consult the glory of God, it is their only design to magnify and extol themselves in the eyes of the world: whilst they would be the great apostles and instructors of the people, they do but privately insult over their infirmities, or laugh at their weakness; and instead of meekness, humility, low and humble thoughts of themselves, they are filled with pride, vain-glory, and self-conceitedness; which being perfectly contrary to the laws of God, no man who is guilty of them can be said to glorify God which is in heaven, but to do quite the contrary.

2. A second mover to such men's religion which we here reprove, is nothing but a peevish and froward disposition, that is never pleased but with what itself does, constantly finding fault with and contradicting whatever suits not its humor, be it never so unaccountable or unreasonable. And are not those, think we, fit to be instructors, and mightily to propagate the gospel of Christ, who take the task on them only that they may undo what others have done, and then know not themselves where to begin or how to proceed? Are not those men like to glorify God exceedingly, who will not suffer men's minds to be fixed and resolved any where, but would have all the world as confounded as themselves in their notions and apprehensions of things? Such men, should they go on as other orderly Christians do, making it their great concern to live a holy and virtuous life, and being indifferent to things in

which their salvation is not concerned, nor the expectation of a future life hazarded, would not tell which way in the world to spend their time: nor can they possibly imagine wherein their light should shine before men, but in finding out abuses and heresies; which, say they, have crept into the church, which defile the holy sanctuary, and which we ought loudly to exclaim against, in order to extirpate both them and the introducers of them. And now they fancy themselves to march out with the army of the God of Hosts, against the army of the unregenerate Philistines; and if any of them fall in the encounter, he shall be compared presently to an Apostle or a martyr, with some grace or other shining so perspicuously in him, as of the two shall be sure to carry the comparison on his side. Patience under any imposition laid on them, and submission to the will of another, are too tame and childish virtues for such warlike and adventurous spirits to be guilty of. These are the second sort of men who are falsely persuaded of their being those shining lights to the world which our Saviour speaks of.

3. The third and last sort of those men we mentioned, were such as are perfectly engaged to their bodies, to their natural tempers and constitutions, for their religion; and therefore it may be truly observed that if in their whole life there happen any thing so extraordinarily as to make a change in their natural temper, it hath the same effect in their religion too. Their devotion comes on them by fits; and if the blood be dull and heavy, if the body be full of humors and vapors, then they fancy to themselves terrible and frightful thoughts of the Deity: it seems utterly impossible to them that such poor, despicable, and contemptible things as themselves, should ever perform any acceptable service to God; that when they have done all they can, they will still be such unprofitable servants, as must expect nothing but a dreadful appearance before the tribunal of God, nothing but an unsupportable sentence from that infinite Majesty, whom even in their performances they have offended: and such like thoughts as these are the entertainment of their minds, so long as the body continues in this posture. But let moderate exercise, a good diet, and a clear air refine their spirits, purify their blood, and remove those gross vapors that oppressed them before, and then presently they condemn their

former sentiments; God appears a being that does not at all delight in the death of his creatures, that considers their human infirmities, and the many snares and temptations to which, by reason of their bodies, they are liable and obnoxious: all these things considered, they are now in very good hopes that it shall go well with them hereafter. And this is the method which they drive on through the whole course of their lives.

Now these men, of any that we have yet named, are generally the most pertinacious and stubborn maintainers of whatsoever they have proposed to themselves, and resolved to believe; for the body not very frequently undergoing such a considerable alteration, and so long continuing it, as is able to beget and settle contrary sentiments in their minds to those which they have at first embraced, they stick still to the most prevailing side; and body, having once possession, is very difficultly and hardly dispossessed by reason. There is that in these men's tempers too which mightily obliges them to appear religious in the eye of the world, and to seem to be great lights: for if it happen that in their melancholy fits their neighbor at any time does but smile, or is exalted to any moderate degree of mirth, they fancy he is presently running headlong to ruin and destruction; that they are bound to appear more mortified before him; and by that means, if possible, to save him from ruin, who, it may be, is farther from it than themselves, and who, from a sense of performing his duty towards God sincerely and faithfully, had the greatest cause to be merry that could possibly be afforded him. Now I dare appeal to all the world (that part only excepted who are here mentioned) whether or no these men's behavior does not tend far more to the disadvantage and ruin of our religion, than to the building it up more largely and gloriously.

Certainly, if it be not extirpated by the falling away of those who have already embraced it on the consideration of what these melancholy men suggest, as necessary to be found in its professors, it will never be extended by the addition of new proselytes. Who is there of a free and lively spirit, maintained without any violation of that religion to which he has been devoted hitherto, that will forsake his former faith for such an one as shall render him dull and lumpish, sour and morose, and

even a burden to himself? Who is there of a cheerful temper, which was never forbidden him by that being whom he has hitherto adored, that will translate his religious worship, homage, and obedience, to another, who will impose it on him as necessary to salvation to lead a life insensible to all those innocent pleasures and passions which he finds necessary to the good both of his body and his mind? And yet such representations as these, do this sort of men, both in their actions and professions, make of our religion; whilst they will have it that it obliges us to what it never intended, nay, to that of which it commands the contrary. Thus they worship God with little more tolerable notions and apprehensions of him than those miserable creatures entertain, to whom the devil is said to appear, and to exact the wounding and crucifying of their bodies, as a piece of worship due to him; and they really inflict more insufferable torments on their minds, than the others do on their bodies: they worship God, not, as we ought to do, with due fear and reverence, with a sense of his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, but with horror and terror, with affrightment, confusion, and amazedness of spirit.

Such are those three sorts of men who are falsely persuaded of their being great instruments of God's glory, and lights to the world; who think they deserve all things of all mankind; who exalt their own merits so high as to make themselves almost so many saviours of the world in their own conceits; when all the religion they boast of is but the effect of a vitiated and depraved mind, or of a distempered and disorderly body.

III. We come now to consider another sort of men very different from these, who are not certainly irreprehensible, though doubtless far more excusable than any we have already named. And those are persons who might, but will not, be such lights to the world as they ought; who live very virtuously, and do a great many good actions; but to avoid the vice of vain-glory, run into the other extreme, denying them their due extent, and so smothering them up, as if they were conscious to themselves of some guilt that redounded to them by the performance of each. True it is, no man ought to be vainly proud from the consideration of the greatest act of self-denial,

or of any other Christian virtue, not though we could suppose him to have a mind and ability sufficient to redress the calamities and hardships of the greater part of mankind: and the reason is, because he is but barely a dispenser of what he has received, and of which he cannot promise himself any durable possession.

Yet there is no doubt at all, but a man may take abundance of pleasure, and the most real content and satisfaction, in every good act he performs; for here he is conscious to himself of improving the talent well for which he was a steward, and knows that he has a master who will reward him.

Neither ought he to be fearful of running into the number of those who do their alms before men, who sound a trumpet before them, and therefore receive their reward in this life, although his alms be taken notice of by men; although he purchase a good estimation by the doing of them; so long as all such things are perfectly beyond, are ever above and beside the scope and intent which he aimed at in the performance. For there is no question at all but that our good acts and virtues should be resplendent and manifest to the eyes of the world, and that our Saviour himself does command the same, in the words of my text, where he says, 'let your light shine before men.' The necessity of which will appear from the clearing of that which we propounded to be the fourth argument of this discourse; which was,

IV. What would be the effects of so exemplary a life; to wit, the conversion of our brethren, and the glory of God, with great benefit and advantage accruing to ourselves.

First, this is necessary for the conversion of our brethren; for in all the good acts which we perform in the eyes of the world, we do instruct and tacitly reprove those who have neglected to do the same on the same occasions, or else have done the contrary. And as there is no virtue by an acquaintance with which another may not be improved, and by seeing our exercise of it, let us instance some few to the exercise of which our state and condition of life often engage us: 1. first then, I say; has Providence so dealt with us as to convert our fortune and estate from better to worse? Are we fallen from a full and plentiful enjoyment of the good things of this life, so as to feel

the want of some of them? Are we forced now to procure that by the labor of our hands and the sweat of our brows, which before flowed almost insensibly on us? Have we changed our soft repose and delicacies for the enduring of hardships and necessities; our delicious fare for that which is harsh and unsavory? And do we at such a time as this support our spirits with Christian courage and magnanimity; with a consideration of the vanity, emptiness, and uncertainty of all earthly enjoyments; with the notion that we are never the better or worse men, nor more or less acceptable in the sight of God, for being possessed of or destitute of this world's goods? And do we make this appear by the cheerfulness of our spirits, by our not desponding or murmuring under our present state, and by our open profession of perfect submission to the will of God, and to that method wherein his wisdom sees best and most convenient to deal with us?

By these means, I say, we do add abundance of strength and courage to the minds of other Christians, who are fallen into the same condition with ourselves: and as they may have thought it impossible, before they saw our patience and toleration, to acquiesce in such a change, and for that reason may never have attempted it, so now may they be taught by our example to exercise the same virtue and grace of contentedness; by which means they become less burdensome to themselves, freed from their former vexations and inquietudes, and also more acceptable in their carriage and behavior towards God.

2. Secondly; are we blest with a very large portion of the good things of this life? And do we approve ourselves very compassionate and sensible to the wants of our fellow creatures, by supplying them from the abundance of our store? Are we likewise ourselves affable and obliging to all persons, though inferior to us in rank and quality, making the wants of our brethren to be the measure of our charity; and by how much the more they are in distress, and so generally more contemptible in the eyes of the world, are we by so much the more courteous and kind, as to persons who are in a condition of receiving the greatest benefit and comfort from such a carriage? I say, it will often happen that by these means we shall com-

mend this virtue of charity, and the exercise of it, to those who till now were strangers to it; whereby we ourselves shall do a double act of charity, both to the persons we convince, and to them also to whose exigencies the persons so convinced administer. Moreover, we shall in the most unexceptionable way reprove those, who have hitherto thought it above their grandeur and state to condescend to men of low degree, or have supposed that they should disgrace and profane their honors, titles, and dignities, by concerning themselves otherwise than to trample on whatever was poor, vile, and contemptible in the eyes of the world.

3. Thirdly; does any occasion at any time bring two, three, or more of us together, and is a temptation offered us before we part, to the joint performance of any evil act, which possibly seems very agreeable to the natural appetites and propensions of us all, and would be swallowed down by most men without any farther consideration? And are we the persons then that put a stop to such a career by suggesting the evil that will ensue on the act, and on breach of the commandment; or how much more pleasure infinitely it will be to have overcome the temptation than to have yielded to it; and do we therefore utterly disclaim it, and profess that we will never venture the peace of our conscience for the gratification of any unlawful desire?

How manifest, I say then, is the good service we do to our brethren, who being at present restrained by our abstinence, possibly grow better fortified in their minds, before a second temptation presents itself? By these instances we see, and it were easy to make it appear, through the whole catalogue of Christian virtues, how not only inculpable, but how commendable and necessary, how much our duty it is, that 'our light so shine before men that they may see our good works:' and that, first, in reference to the good and conversion of our neighbors.

2. A second effect of our light shining before men is the glory of God.

The notion or idea which we frame to ourselves of God implying infinite perfection; and the highest glory which it is possible for any being to be possessed of being a part of infinite

perfection; most certain it is that all the good we are able to perform, cannot so contribute to God's glory, nor all our evil actions so detract from it, as to make him a being more or less perfect than he was before: for this were to put it into our power to ungod the Deity, and to make the extent of his perfections to depend on our wills, which are changeable and mutable; so that man would have more arbitrary power over God, than God ever does exercise or indeed has over man: for all evil being imperfection, God never does, nor can he be truly said to contribute any thing towards making any man less morally perfect than he was in that state of innocency and integrity in which he at first created him: and for this depraved condition into which we are now lapsed, we have only to blame ourselves, and our misimproving of that liberty, which God's infinite grace and mercy vouchsafed to us, of choosing the good and refusing the evil.

We must not so understand our glorifying God, as if it were in our power to make him more perfect than he is, than he ever was, and ever will be to all eternity. But in this sense we may properly be said to glorify him, in as much as we tell and declare his glory, making others to behold the brightness of it, and to be in love with a Being so infinitely glorious, and worthy of our highest love, admiration, and adoration. We are all his creatures, the workmanship of his hands; he at first brought us into being; and we are not able to continue that being one moment without his good providence watching over us: our whole and intimate dependence is on him; and therefore whatsoever we do in obedience to his commands, is but our duty, and a just performance, to which we are more obliged, than we are to gratitude towards any man who has been our greatest and most considerable benefactor: for no man can confer so great a benefit on us as our being is; without which there would be no capacity for any body else to contribute any thing towards us at all.

Our glorifying God then, is that which we express in our acts of gratitude for what we have received from him; which gratitude he requires us to manifest in the submission of our wills to his laws, and the conforming of our minds to his commandments; one of which is, that we be exemplary in our lives and

conversation, 'having our light shining before men;' which God, because we should not want any encouragement to love and obey him, will take as an honor and glory done unto himself, not suffering the performance of our duty and just obligation to go unrewarded. And therefore in several places of Scripture God styles himself glorified by his creatures, when they are faithful in the exercise of their duties towards him.

In the 50th Psalm and the 23rd verse, we have these words; 'whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.' Praise is the most just and easy part of our duty; that which no man, who has but an ordinary sense of civility, will deny to another from whom he has received any courtesy. Yet even in the performance of this duty of declaring God's infinite generosity towards us, and the unspeakable benefits we have received from him, God accounts himself glorified by us; and the omission of this is by the Apostle St. Paul, in the first chapter to the Romans and the 21st verse, called a sin of not glorifying God; when, reproving the Gentiles, and showing many sins of which they were guilty, he mentions it as one, 'because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful:' here ingratitude is reckoned as one of those faults by which they did dishonor God.

In the first Epistle general of Peter, iv. 7. we have likewise these words: 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever.' So that we see, in the second place, how by the performance of our duty in general, the whole of which may be truly said to be contained in 'the letting our light shine before men,' we may glorify God which is in heaven.

3. The third and last effect of our light thus shining before men, will be our own advantage, and eternal salvation in the end.

This first appears from the improvement we shall make in all Christian virtues (which are necessary to our salvation) by the constant practice of them; so that we shall go on from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another, till

at last we come to behold the face of God in Zion; as likewise from the peace and contentedness of mind we shall have in this life, which only the godly and upright man enjoys; being freed from the horrors and frights of a shipwrecked conscience, enjoying all innocent pleasures and cheerfulness in this world; being neither fond nor weary of it, willing to stay, or willing to depart whensoever God shall call for us; being assured of a more durable inheritance, when this mortal life shall have an end, and that, as the last advantage which God has promised to all who live virtuously, who honor him, and love their neighbors. We shall only add a place or two of Scripture in confirmation of what has been said, and so conclude.

In the 33rd chapter of Job, 26th verse, it is said; 'He shall pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy; for he will render unto man his righteousness.' And in the 25th of St. Matthew's gospel, at the last verse, our Saviour concludes the description of the last judgment with these words. 'And these,' that is the wicked, 'shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' And as to our honoring and glorifying of God, he himself says, in the 1st of Samuel ii. 30, 'them that honor me, I will honor;' and our Saviour, in the 12th chapter of St. John's gospel, 26th verse, 'if any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my father honor.'

And lastly, that we shall produce good to ourselves by the conversion of our neighbor, this is manifest, from the 3rd chapter of Ezekiel, in the 18th and 19th verses; where we have a most severe threatening for the neglect of our duty in that case, and a promise of the most comfortable issue to succeed the performance of it. 'When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand: yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.'

Thus have we seen the effects of our light shining before men; to wit, the conversion of our brethren, the glory of God, and the salvation of our own souls. What remains then, but that having so great an encouragement, so persuasive an invitation to a holy life, we presently set about it; that we endeavor to remove all obstacles and impediments, to mortify our lusts, to subdue our appetites, to crucify our affections; to be dead to an inordinate love of any thing this life affords; to labor after an improvement in all the graces of Christianity; adding unto our faith virtue, to virtue knowlege, to knowlege patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness and charity; that, these graces being in us and abounding, we may not be wanting, not unfruitful in the sight and service of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, let us think of these things: for in so doing will our light shine before men; and they seeing our good works, will glorify our Father which is in heaven, till at last both they and we shall be made partakers of an eternal inheritance there. To which place may God of his infinite mercy bring us, for the sake and merits of his Son and our blessed Saviour; to whom, with himself and holy spirit, be all honor, praise, and adoration, now and for evermore.

SUMMARY OF

FOURTH ADDITIONAL SERMON.

ROMANS, CHAP. VI.—VERSE 21.

PRELIMINARY observations on the pernicious nature of sin.

I. Its fruitlessness is shown;

1. In the act; wherein men never find any real contentment, but rather shame, confusion, and destruction, &c.: this topic enlarged on.

2. In the short abode which its unsatisfactory pleasures make with us, the delights of sin having their end before we can well perceive their beginning.

3. It is shown that sin becomes pleasing not by its sweet taste, but by our own vicious and corrupted palate; &c.

4. Sin is fruitless, because it is so far from answering, that it always falls short of expectation.

5. The fruit of sin is shown to be bitter and unpleasant in raising strife and feuds in a man, between his flesh and his spirit: for sin is opposed to reason; and whatever is opposed to reason, must be done with the reluctancy of conscience; and this force of conscience will ever wound the soul; &c.

6. Sin is shown to be fruitless, as being attended with pains that are greater than the pleasures which it brings: these pains and mischiefs dilated on; and instances adduced.

II. The shamefulness of sin. Definition of *shame*. Shame shown to be the inseparable companion of sin. Application of what has been already said, as a dissuasive from sin.

III. The deadly nature of sin pointed out. 1. It is shown that sin naturally causes death: 2. that it morally causes death, as being against the law. The miseries that attend such a state are set out in the following reflections. 1. That it excludes us from God's favor, and makes us obnoxious to his wrath, &c. 2. That the miseries of such a state will be endless. 3. It will be a great aggravation of those miseries, that we incurred them for such vain and short-lived pleasures. 4. The sorrow of a sinner will also be increased by the consideration that he brought it on himself, freely and without compulsion; nay, in despite of God's grace, &c. Concluding observations.

FOURTH ADDITIONAL SERMON.

THE FRUITLESSNESS OF SIN.

ROMANS, CHAP. VI.—VERSE 21.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

To act suitably to itself, as it is natural to every creature, so is it more commendable in a man, and best becomes his faculties; who having a power of determining himself to either side, then becomes the due subject of praise when he makes choice of that part, which of the two is most agreeable to his being, and by that most effective of his happiness. Now seeing those actions only can be good, which are the cause of real good to the agent, it will follow that sin is most repugnant to human nature, and always pernicious to the author: for its ugly deformities it is carefully to be shunned, as the most venomous and infective plague, by every one who pretends to reason, or believes he has a soul; especially if I can make it appear that it is fruitless and empty in the act; that it is shameful and full of disgrace in the effects, deadly and destructive in the end: all which things, as they are insinuated by the Apostle in this text, 'what fruit had ye then, &c.' so I shall endeavor to prove in the following heads.

1. That sin is fruitless in the act, because men never find therein any contentment: the only motives to action must either be the removal of a present evil wherewith we are oppressed, or the acquisition of some absent good, to render the measures of felicity and happiness, whereof we now partake,

completely perfect; but if sin neither procures the one nor removes the other; neither takes away our present maladies, nor gains for us new causes of happiness; and if the actions, whose effects be these, alone can satisfy us; besides, if it can be proved that sin is so far from diminishing, that it adds to our misery; and so far from increasing, that really it diminishes our happiness; you will easily grant me that it not only is fruitless, but shameful, and big with destruction. The cause of pleasure arises from the congruity that is between the being and its object; so that as often as the object bears no proportion or similitude to the essence of a man, so often it can neither satisfy his mind, nor delight and gratify his affections: but the soul of man, being an immaterial substance, requires its object to be such; and so its greatest glory must consist in a likeness and conformity to God, his Creator, and its most intense pleasure in a uniform and intire obedience to God's will; which will mount him into the regions above, and set him at God's right hand, where are pleasures for evermore.

Wherefore, the man who, having debauched his understanding, seeks contentment amidst the follies of the world, the dalliances of sin, and the vanities of the flesh, is infinitely laborious in his quest after happiness and comfort, in those places where nothing but calamity and ruin are to be found: he runs into the jaws of death in pursuance of life; by a strange solecism, that he may blessed, he enters the mouth of hell and confusion, and hopes for those pleasures from an evil conversation, which proceed only from the conscience of things well done. Thus wicked men impose on themselves, and abuse their nature, whilst they call that which is bitter sweet, that which is sour and deadly pleasant and wholesome, and then greedily devour and swallow it down, as if it were really such: hereby the poor sinner is continually tortured with plenty or scarceness; for he will never give over to need, until he be satisfied; and he never will be satisfied, as long as there is so vast a disproportion between what he desires and his own nature; which is the reason why you see him always wishing for what he cannot have, or for the removal of what he cannot lose, or for the continuation of something which he cannot longer keep, or for some such alteration in his condition, which he in no

wise is able to bring about: thus let every sense be satisfied with its proper, and so most pleasant objects; let his eyes have their full gaze on beauty and lovely colours; let his palate relish the most dainty meats and delicate sauces; let his ears be filled with exquisite sounds, and receive all the pleasures which arise from harmony and the various intertextures and combination of musical notes; let him be cloyed with the delights of smelling and touch; yet if a man's conscience labor under a deep sense of some sinful and mischievous villany, all these things are so far from being effective of solid joy, that they even nauseate and bring black discontent with them. Who would not have deemed that to have had the ear of his king, the smiles and knees of the subject, the greatest places and honors about the court, the power of humbling and of dashing into disrepute his competitors, to have had the whole affairs of the kingdom go through his hands, the intire disposal of his prince's favors and honors, with the concurrency of all the pleasures that riches, power, or reputation could yield, would have been enough to have glutted the craving desires of the great courtier Haman? And yet, please to take notice, how the want of a compliment and cringe from the vulgar and disrespected Mordecai, sullies and brings darkness over all his splendor, enfeebles and enervates his puissance and grandeur, cramps the dilated and nimble survey which he had in his fancy of his own greatness, sours all his pleasures, makes his head to hang down and his heart to ache, insomuch that at length (so intolerable be the consequences of sin) he chokes himself, by a device to hang this his mean enemy. Nay, Solomon, who was the most experienced for inquiry, the most wise for contrivance, the most rich for compassing these corporal and sensual pleasures, hath, after the trial of many years, wherein he racked nature, and tortured her very bowels to extract and squeeze out the most refined and pure delights which either the number or variety of her creatures could afford, at last affirmed of them, that they are vanity and vexation: like briars and thorns, sinful pleasures in their gathering prick and wound you; *that is their vexation:* and in their burning they forthwith consume and waste away; *that is their vanity:* so that they have no more proportion to real and lasting comfort, than he who personates a king on the

stage has to a real king who sits on the throne and sways the sceptre: nay, put wicked men into what circumstances you please, they will turn all into bitterness, and either by their anger or pride, covetousness or envy, lust or revenge, will render their state miserable and forlorn: in their prosperity, and under the dispensations of a smiling condition, they will surfeit, and forget God; in their distress they will steal, and upbraid him.

2. The fruitlessness of sin will appear, as from the unsatisfactory pleasures thereof,* so also from the short abode they make with us; the delights of sin having their end before we well perceive their beginning; for as they are empty and small in their own nature, so are they made less and inconsiderable by their sudden disappearance: like lightning, you no sooner see the flash, but they vanish and are no more: therefore, were the relishes of sin intense and ravishing, yet their quick departure would turn the delight into pain and torment, to the loading of the sinner's soul with disquietness and indignation. What greater reproach can be cast on the wanton and lascivious person, than that, after the long absence of sleep, and the great loss of spirits in laying his wicked plot, and almost bringing all circumstances about to the achieving of his unclean and sinful design, he by one petty and not foreseen accident, may be defeated of his whole purpose; when he is to begin all again, to use new engines, to repeat his old toil and labor, tedious watchings, unreasonable importunity, and misbecoming violence? and if at length by his indefatigable diligence and unwearied study, he comes to purchase what he so impatiently

* Our life is so short, that, were it one constant fit of pleasure, the voluptuousness of sin could be of no long continuance: but alas, that man has not yet been born of a woman whose days have not been full of trouble, or whose life at best bears not a resemblance to a work chequered with black and white, bitter and sweet, joy and sorrow interwoven and twisted together: but for the most part we have more of the black than white; our bitter predominates over our sweet, and the days of our grief far surpass in number those from which we receive any pleasure; so that if our life be short, and the greatest part thereof (as I appeal to every one's experience) filled with vexation of spirit, it will follow that our pleasures needs must be so.

desired, he will find expectation so shamefully baffled by the fading nature of his pleasure, that it will not, in length, equal any one of these many troubles with which he afflicted his spirits, and vexed his life. Is it not therefore great imprudence for a man thus to waste himself for what dies as soon as it is born? What excuse can the drunkard and intemperate person make for his beastly abusing of his own body; since, like the path of a ship on the waves, the next morning he knows not what is become of the delights of his last night's surfeit? which, notwithstanding, are registered in the court of heaven and his own conscience, to be produced against him at the terrible day of the Lord's appearance.

I therefore make my appeal to the most bold and daring sinner, if it will not be a great enlargement of hell torments, for one to reflect with himself that he shall be everlastingly damned for that, which is of so short and momentary continuance, that, if he looks round about him, he cannot tell what or where it is? Besides, if the pleasures of sin continue, they grow irksome and cloy us; but if they so speedily withdraw their appearance, then they do not compensate our labor and toil; so that sinful delight, you see, if it abide, nauseates the appetite; and if it vanisheth, it is not to be esteemed: it dwells too short a time with us to merit the name of pleasant; yet should it dwell longer, it would be loathsome.

3. Sin becomes pleasing, not by its sweet taste, but by the viciousness of our corrupted palate; and man must be inflamed with wine and lust, hurried and confounded with rage and inconsideration, before he can feel any deliciousness of sin. Hence we observe that young and rash heads and wild gallants are taken with those approaches of evil which the prudent and men of sober thoughts abominate. How does the wise and experienced father pity the unadvised and hot adventures of his raw son, knowing that sin doth as certainly cheat him, as he believes it real! which is the reason that a grave and discreet person will easily defy and resist temptations, on which youth and inadvertency split and shipwreck themselves: insomuch that a man must unsoul himself, and put a cheat on his reason, before he can have any gusto or savory relish from the actions or sin; which fully discovers how vain and trifling,

how fruitless and void of joy is sin, which is necessitated first to draw a thick and dark veil of cozenage over the intellectuals, and, juggler-like, cast a mist on the understanding, as well as bribe the will, before it can be so much as deemed grateful or obliging to its horribly gulled customers: and those are odd and unaccountable perfections, to the apprehending of which a man must weaken his judgment, as being best discerned by those who have the worst eyes. Thus a person seized by a high fever shall conceive more pleasure from a glass of cold beer, than he who is in a sound temper of body does from the most delicious wine; and yet I believe you would brand the man with folly who should make himself sick, only for the sake of such a pleasure: how much more then must they be marked for unadvisedness and indiscretion, who throw their souls into such mortal and burning fits of lust and ambition, only to palliate them by the cool and fading joys of iniquity! Wherefore I conclude, the pleasures that proceed from pampering the flesh are such as belong not to man, as man; that is, as a rational creature; but are proper to brutes; on which it follows that by how much more he affects corporeal pleasures, so much the more he unmans himself, and approaches nearer to the nature of a beast.

4. Sin is fruitless in the commission, because it is so far from answering, that it always falls infinitely short of expectation. We never grieve at any thing so much as at the disappointment of that which we had certainly promised ourselves; so that methinks it should both mightily abate the opinion of sensual enjoyments, and clog the wheels in our hot and eager pursuance of wicked vanities, to consider that we shall find our expectation so abominably defeated in fruition: for did men but foresee, and foreseeing seriously weigh and consider, how mean and unvaluable is the utmost that sin can administer to the gratification of their brutish appetites, it were impossible they should be at such costs and expense, and break through so many disadvantages, in following what, as it will be their inevitable ruin, so in the very moments of enjoyment makes no such pleasing returns, as to recompense in any proportion the toil they underwent. The reason of all is man's boundless will; and until this applies itself to its due object, which is

God, it is not to be conceived, though nature and prosperous success should kindly attend a man, and bring all his projects and designs to a lucky event, that these should stop or satiate his cravings; in as much as the very things which he impatiently expected to allay his scorching desires, do unhappily serve to enlarge and inflame them. Thus you may cram all his senses with abundance and vanity, but can never glut his greedy humor; you may load his stomach, but never fulfil his appetite; and may sooner burst the man, than allay his thirst; because, though his body be finite and of a known compass, yet is his will infinite, and not to be brought within limits.

5. The fruit of sin is bitter and unpleasant, in being the cause of strife and feuds in a man between his flesh and spirit; for whatever is sinful must be opposed to reason, and whatsoever is opposed to reason must be done against and with the reluctance of conscience; which force on conscience will stab and wound the soul, and so be a cause of enmity and sedition, faction and contest within a man's self, spoiling his breast of all inward contentment and peace, in being productive not only of doubts and scruples in the head, but of tremblings and fears, amazements and horrors in the heart.*

A sin is then committed, when a man by lust and passion after a thing is drawn away from the desire of that which is his true good and real interest, unto which he essentially and by nature inclined: wherefore sin, as such, must be contrary to nature, and thereby in a state of hostility with the soul, endeavoring as well to overpower her faculties, as to deform and blemish her beauty: from which it follows, that a sinner must necessarily be divided against himself, and by these contrary motions and opposite endeavors, must be subject to pains, griefs, and miseries, the genuine results of that Law which the great Apostle speaks of, in the members, which wars against the Law in the mind: in so much that we cannot sport ourselves in softnesses and dalliances of sin, without denouncing open war against our better part.

6. Sin is fruitless, as being attended with pains that are greater than the pleasures which it brings. Sin, like a trap,

* 'For there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.'

may possibly at the top be smeared with a little honey, underneath which is contained a draught of deadly wine, far more pricking and terrible than the delights were pleasant, which it pretended to bring: like as Jael did to Sisera, it decoys us in with offers of wine and milk, until taking advantage of our sleep and security, it nails and rivets our very souls to the chambers of death. Thus for the most part sickness is the just chastisement of excess in diet; and from abundance of wine a man becomes a beast, with this difference only, that he is a beast with reason, as a beast is so without it.

The delicious parts of sin soon run away, and leave nothing but bitterness and dregs behind. The worldly sensualities which men enjoy; the sprightly and brisk vigor that with a blushing and furious frenzy quickens their pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh; the delights they are wont to receive from ceremonies, and the little formalities of courtship and address; all these by a violent shock or two of an acute disease, or at farthest, by the stormy gusts and winter that accompany old age and gray hairs, are blown away: and indeed it would be well if the sinner could so escape; but, alas! it proves far otherwise; for as the fruits and delicacies pass away, so there is left behind a long catalogue of infirmities and loathsome diseases; and, of all evils the worst, a foul recoiling conscience, which will not only bear witness against the sinner, but will be a severe judge. Thus as every sinner is big with young, and desires to be delivered, so he is great with a young serpent, which will eat through his sides and rend his belly in sunder: the fond and silly parent of sin must look for his own overthrow to come out of his own bowels, and to meet the destruction of himself, when by a virtuous and religious life he might have created a monument which would have propagated his name to remote and distant ages. The truth of all which would manifestly appear, and carry a clear evidence along with it, should we take a large survey of particular sins.

How great a torment is the revengeful man to himself, while he suffers passion to kindle his blood, and set his heart a boiling, to heat his temper and inflame his whole body; fire and brimstone breaking out at his nostrils, his mouth, and whatsoever passage can give vent to his fury; as if he intended to

prevent divine vengeance, in being his own executioner, to begin his punishment in his sin, by entering the unextinguishable flames of hell before he goes out of the world! He seems swollen with poison, which, if it gets not out, will make him burst in sunder; and if it does, its mischievous force is doubled, in causing certain destruction to himself and others; so that it gives full assurance to a sinner of hell by yielding him an ample taste and earnest of his future punishment beforehand. It is too obvious for me to remind you of the miseries that are the constant attendants of envy; how the envious person feeds on himself, devours his own flesh, and melts his fat into leanness; with what perpetual restlessness, tossings, and tumblings, he wastes his blood, consumes his spirits, and dries up his own marrow, unless he can destroy his fellow creature, whom God has commanded him to love as himself.

I will not relate to you that constant war in which the proud man is engaged; how his vice sets him at a distance from all men; for he cannot brook his superior, because he is above him; he abides not his equal, because he is so; and he maliciously oppresses those beneath him, out of fear lest they should become as great as himself.

And what greater misery can betide a man, than to have his mind always filled with fears and disquietude, sometimes to be flattered with hopes, at other times to be tortured with jealousies, and ever to be vexed with new matters of desire; whilst the utmost his ambition can effect, is that he should laboriously heave a ponderous burden to the top of a mountain, which at length, in its impetuous return, will crush and break to pieces the limbs of him, whose muscles gave to it its first advance!

Neither need I recount to you the many afflictions of the lurking miser, whose cares and labor were not greater in the getting, than his fears are vexatious in the keeping of his pelf; whose soul seems to have had a transmigration, and to have wandered into his bags, whilst he has embodied his riches into his complexion and temper, so that you cannot cut his purse, but with that you stab his heart; and by the same wound you let out his money and life together.

You all know the black and melancholy terrors which

press the manslayer on the heels; and what dismal thoughts salute him in the morning, who over night in his rage has killed a man. I pass by the uneasiness of a froward mind, and and an awkward peevish humor, which doubles every misfortune which it feels, renders it unsufferable, and indeed makes a man incapable of receiving the mercies of God, or the good will of men.

Can any one suppose that there is any thing more destructive to mankind than that frenzy, and drunkenness of soul, which is inseparable from anger? View his grim visage, his inflamed and sparkling eye, his pale and wan cheeks, his distorted looks, his foaming mouth and broken voice, his shaking hand and trembling joints, together with the dizziness and fury of his head and heart, and you will easily grant the great folly of choosing everlasting damnation for the delights of this sin: so innumerable a company of torments are they which attend independency on God, and distrust of his providence. It would be endless to take an exact view of the unhappinesses and calamities that are the real products of uncleanness and intemperance; how the consequence of the one is, for the most part, a loathsome painful disease; and of the other, to feel the torments of a restless night, (though he has not slain a man,) a night that is just like that of a murderer, and of a person with an affrighted conscience: so wakes the intemperate man; so broken and sick, so disorderly and irregular are the slumbers of the drunkard.

Wherefore by this time I hope it is evident to you, from the want of satisfaction and shortness in the delights of sin, from the fact that we must put on rashness and folly before we can relish its voluptuousness, from its defeating expectation, as well as raising a war between the flesh and the spirit; and, lastly, from the punishment that always attends sin; that it is very unfruitful in the act and commission; which was the first part of my text, 'what fruit had ye then,' &c.

In the second place, sin is shameful: 'whereof you are now ashamed,' and disgraced.

Shame may be thus defined; a grief arising from the discovery of any misbecoming behavior or unworthy action. Now that sin is full of follies, (as may appear from what I have said,)

and misbecomes us, in that it is ..ue against God, and so is unworthy of us, will readily be confessed by every one who owns his existence and mighty obligations to him.

Shame is the inseparable servant of sin, an odious but officious companion, whom life can never entertain without grief, nor death easily shake off, till the memory of the thing is lost in time, and time swallowed up in oblivion. 'Tis the misery of guilt with constraint to cherish shame in her bosom, the child she hates; and to bestow such a fatal issue on posterity, whose faces shall carry the true stamp and character of her own deformity. And how great a sovereignty soever sin may seem to challenge over human nature, which she acquired by the disobedience of our first parents, yet shall she in the end find herself overcome; in that sin, living for the most part in darkness, shuts up all her malignity with death, while shame, her untoward brat, shall survive to upbraid her actions in the light, and arraign her after death at the bar of justice.

Now to make an action become shameful, it is requisite that there be something disgraceful in it, and that it proceed from the will freely; for no man is ashamed of the misfortunes he could not prevent, or of what he is compelled to do by the force of another: but sin being an action proceeding from the will against the law, is blamable, because against the law; and then deservedly shameful, for that proceeding from the will, it is a free action, and so might have been prevented or omitted: hence is it that no man, almost, will own his villanies and impieties, as they are such, but will either deny or excuse them: thus you shall see men abate their crimes by imputing them to their natural complexion, their callings or company, to vehement importunity or multiplicity of temptations: and many times they tell a lie; committing two faults, that they may not be thought guilty of one.

Of so ugly and loathsome a nature is sin, that men always paint its deformed face, and often cover their basest vices under the protection of a religious countenance and title, while they lose their name, and seeming virtues. Nor is it of moment here to object, that some men commit iniquity without remorse, and sin without shame; for let those sinners know that their condition is more dangerous and full of horror, by how much

they have a less sense of their sin : as the patient is most desperately handled when he knows not he is sick, so that sinner seems incurable, who has sinned himself beyond the sense of sin, so as to make a mock thereat, and to be given up by God to final obduration, so that one sin may be punished by another; which of all punishment is the worst : neither must we believe that there be no colors because some men are blind, or shutting their eyes refuse to see ; much less ought we to think that the debauched person can strip sin of its natural ugliness and filth, any more than he can rub off blackness from the Ethiopian, or add a cubit to his own stature; for plain-dealing conscience, which can no wise dissemble guilty actions, will one time or other betray him to a discovery, and certainly at his death expose him to open shame, and leave him as a fool to men's contempt and God's vengeance.

Wherefore, to apply what has been said; 1. if sin be fruitless and without satisfaction, then let this persuade us to abate our eager pursuit after it : for why should we spend our labor on that which will not recompense our toil, or lay out our money on what will not satisfy us ? What man in his sober wits would enter on an action which he knew beforehand would not agree with his purpose, or conduce to the bringing about his design ? or who ever willingly would spend a day in a course of life which he certainly knew would not contribute to his pleasure or advantage ? And yet we add days to weeks, weeks to months, and months to years, in the purchase of that, the possession of which we know can never please us. Wherefore let us entertain a low and mean opinion of the glories of this world, and the pomp thereof, and no longer trust in unstable riches, honors, or power, nor permit ourselves to be puffed up by the large share of them which we perhaps may enjoy ; seeing that, without real goodness and virtue, they will arise to no true value ; for, till then, let a man have all the choicest curiosities of nature crammed together into his body ; let him be made of the finest ingredients and most delicate principles the world can afford ; let there be in his face a concurrency of all beauty and shape, in his nature an eminence of all sweetness and ingenuity, in his mind a conspiration of the politest and most desirable varieties of all kind of learning ; yet notwith-

standing this, in respect of eternal happiness, his soul has no greater right or assurance than that of the meanest slave or beggar.

2. If the voluptuousness of sin be so flitting and of such short continuance, let us renounce its service, disown its dominion, cast off its authority, and no longer suffer our souls to be enslaved to drudgery and bondage on terms so mean, such as are not only not profitable, but destructive to our being.

3. If sin be ugly and shameful, let us admire our own folly and weakness, who for so loathsome a thing hazard the loss of our precious spirit, when yet we should be infinite losers though we had the whole world in exchange: and let us endeavor to make our shame productive of our conversion; for those whom neither the advice of friends has amended, nor the sword of the magistrate reformed, shame alone has sometimes possessed with a sense of their crime; and when all other good motions have been invalid, this one has been admitted with success: thus the stubborn and stiff-necked disposition of the Jews, which neither gentle admonitions could sweeten, nor prodigious miracles work to any softness, shame and reproach forced into a conversion. Therefore out of shame for our sins, and sorrow that we have grieved the blessed Jesus with our offences, and wounded him with our transgressions, let us fall down before our Maker, and humble our very souls; begging of him to make us so ashamed of our sins here, that we be not punished with death eternal for them hereafter; 'for the end of those things is death.' The next thing I am to show, is the deadliness of sin in the end.

1. Sin naturally causeth death: the natural cause of death is the indisposition of the body; the indisposition of the body arises from distemper; and there be few distempers whereof sin is not the cause: most diseases proceed from intemperance, or a niggardly pining of the body; from immoderate labors, or from sloth and idleness; from too much watchfulness, care, abundance and intenseness of thoughts, or from a loose and remiss behavior; all of which, since they partake, in the one extreme or the other, of excess, and since all excess is evil, justly deserve the name of sin. It would not be difficult to account

to you for the manner in which particular diseases, by their physical influx, immediately or more remotely introduce our latter end : daily experience makes it manifest that the common drunkard swallows down his ruin and liquor together, having as much reason as they of old, to complain that there is death in the pot, in that he courts death, and disports himself in his own misery and destruction, bidding as fair as any man living for fever, dropsy, or consumption ; all or some of which as he hardly can escape, so they are not the only murdering retinue that follow this wickedness. I might instance those horrible and tormenting distempers that are the fruits and the end of uncleanness, which not only kill the infatuated captive, but make him die full of anguish and sorrow ; which cause his bowels to consume and his bones to rot, till his body becomes as offensive and loathsome to man, as his soul, after separation, will appear deformed and odious before God. Thus it appears that sin by its own proper and natural efficiency is the cause of death : wherefore I proceed to show,

2. That sin morally causeth death, as being against the law. Although Almighty God, by the benefits bestowed in creation, acquired such an absolute right over his creature that he might, agreeably enough to his justice, have required of it complete and universal obedience, without promising any reward; yet out of his infinite goodness and love, freely determining his creature to ways effective of its happiness, guarding and affrighting it from what certainly would be the cause of its undoing, he was pleased to propound a most bountiful and desirable recompense attending a dutiful carriage, as well as to make that our duty which was easy, pleasant, and suitable to our very natures ; in the mean time pronouncing, on the other hand, (so solicitous was he to keep us from sin,) desolation and confusion of face to gainsayers and opposers of his will. From which these two things follow, that the whole mass of mankind is inevitably doomed and decreed to everlasting felicity, or to endless misery and utter ruin : to felicity, if obedient ; to death and ruin, if guilty and sinful : ' for the end of those things is death.' And this is that second death spoken of in Scripture, which is the death of the soul, and is so much more ter-

rible than the first, by how much the soul is more precious than the body.* The miseries that attend this will appear evidently from these reflexions:

1. In that it excludes us from God's favor, and makes us obnoxious to his wrath: as it is said of the king, that he is the fountain of honor, so it is more true of God, that he is the fountain of all happiness and comfort. Riches and honor, power and greatness, reputation and wealth, or whatever makes one man valuable above another, wit and parts, judgment and fancy, comeliness and shape and goodly looks, must all be confessed to derive their first being from God; and by consequence, as it must be through his favor that we can come to their possession, so are they all insignificant and effective of no happiness or contentment without his blessing: thus the proud and haughty Belshazzar, although the greatest monarch then on earth, at a great and impious entertainment among a thousand of his lords and courtiers, who were flattering and adoring his greatness, even amidst his jollities and caresses, quaffing wine in the gold and silver vessels, which with sacrilegious hand he had taken from Jerusalem, no sooner espies the hand-writing on the wall, but paleness seizes his visage, and despair takes possession of his soul:† and what comfort then, poor man! can he meet from the eminence of his place, the number of his retinue, the sumptuousness of his feast, or whatever bears the stamp of greatness about him? Nothing but discontent and trouble vex and disquiet his mind, until within the space of a few hours (for he was slain that same night) he yields up his life to account for the sins of his soul. And this will be the state of every impenitent wretch that dies in his sins; to lie under God's heavy wrath and displeasure, and the insupportable burden of a wounded conscience; which who can bear?

* And here is verified the words of the psalmist, 'The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands:' Psal. ix. 16. 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God:' ver. 17.

† Dan. v. 22. 23.

2. It is a great accession to the miseries of this condition, for every sufferer to consider that it will be endless. As that pleasure is not greatly to be regarded, which, though it be intense, soon passeth away, so is that misery little to be feared which will meet with a quick period; but as those joys are to to be deemed truly solid and highly desirable, which are not only great and pleasant, but will be continued to remote and distant ages; so we cannot but with trembling consider and reflect on those pains and griefs which will be eternal.

How will it fill a poor soul with vexation and disquietude, to think that after the revolution of many thousands of years in flames, and yet in darkness, it is still no nearer to a release from its unspeakable tortures, than it was at the first entrance into the pit! for neither the worm dies, nor will the fire go out.

Faint glimmerings and appearances of change bear up the spirits under the severest crushes of an untoward fortune; while black despair, of all passions the most afflicting, breaks the very heart; so that to be without the least hope of redress, is to be perfectly miserable.

3. It will be an aggravation of our misery to consider that we forfeited heaven for the purchase of such trifling and vain things, as I already have demonstrated the pleasures of sin to be. Who in a right mind would run the risk of damning his soul, and of dwelling in everlasting burnings, for so fruitless and unsatisfactory a thing as sin? If there were any comparison reasonably to be made between the pleasures of sin and its punishment; if a few years bore any value with respect to eternity; if the good things of the world were of any esteem, compared with the joys of heaven; if there were any thing so strong as to oppose God's power, or so good and excellent as to bear the least proportion to his favor; perhaps then there might be some slight plea made in excuse of the sinner: but since there is none at all, these pleasures being only productive of vanity and vexation, being short and transitory, we cannot but at once condemn the sinner of the most stupid folly and madness, as well as of the greatest wickedness and impiety.

4. It will much increase the sorrow of a sinner to consider that he brought this forlorn and unhappy state on himself, freely and without compulsion. Wicked men will have no reason to complain of God's injustice, or their own hard measure, in that for the misspending of a little time they are tortured with endless and unsupportable anguish, if they but seriously perpend with themselves, that it was their own free choice and election; that when life, and terms of peace, and overtures of happiness were made to them, they refused these, and embraced death and misery. And what ought a man to repine at less than his own doings; or less to think himself injured by than his own willing and uncompelled acts? For God having made a covenant with man, wherein he required those conditions which he would enable him to perform, and having promised on performance to make him everlastingly happy, or to remit him to perpetual punishment, should he prove refractory and disobedient; if man freely determined to choose the worst and destructive part, whom in reason should he blame beside himself? And therefore art thou left inexcusable, O man! Not that man of himself is able to procure his own salvation; but God refuseth not to give his grace to every one who shall ask, or will not resist it; in so much that man's ruin is from the perverseness of his own will: hence it is that God, vindicating his justice, tells his people of old that their destruction is from themselves, expostulates often with them on the equitableness of his dealings, and upbraids them with their obstinacy and perverseness, pathetically exhorting them to amend; 'Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O House of Israel?' and confirming all with an oath; 'as I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the death of a sinner:' which complaint was often taken up by our Saviour against Jerusalem: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that stonest,' &c. from all which it is apparent, how reasonable is God's behavior to his creatures, and how unwilling he is that they should die; so that it must be great matter of grief and lamentation to reflect, that, notwithstanding God has made such large provision, and taken such a fatherly care over us, we yet should so willingly and freely undo and destroy ourselves. Indeed

did he, as some falsely and unreasonably have supposed, decree infinite numbers of his innocent creatures, without respect to their sins, to utter ruin, then might they complain of his cruelty, and their own hard fate, but could in no wise blame or accuse themselves, for what it never was in their power to prevent: but since the case is far otherwise, since it is man's own doing, and God must be acquitted, it cannot but highly torment the damned to think that they have brought these torments without constraint on their own heads.

Wherefore, to conclude; if sin be unfruitful; if the way of the wicked be not only unpleasant, unsatisfactory, and such as we must be ashamed of, but will bring irreparable desolation in the end; if it be so dismal a condition, to be banished from God's presence, and to be made an everlasting object of his wrath and displeasure; if it be intolerable to take up our habitation in the lake of fire and brimstone, where we shall see no spectacles but what are ghastly and affrighting, and where the ear shall be affected with nothing but the shrieks, cries, and hoarse groans of devils and damned spirits; if we cannot without horror consider that this condition of misery will be endless and without period; if the poor soul must be forced to confess that it brought this sad state voluntarily and without coercion on itself; what reason then can be given, why we should be yet so secure as hardly to think ourselves concerned? Did we but behold these things as present, which in a short time certainly will be, (for whatever is really in the future will one day necessarily be in the present tense,) doubtless it would awaken us to a serious consideration of our lives, and rouse up in us a just indignation against sin, so as to hate and abominate nothing more, nor to dread any thing like it. Therefore since it is clear from Scripture and hourly observation, that it is appointed for all men once to die, so that it is hard to say whether he would be more vain that should go about to prove, or he more ridiculous that denied it; and since we so stand accountable to God for our behavior, that as we sow here we shall reap hereafter; seeing that where the tree falleth there it shall lie, and that a religious and holy life is the only course to render our future state blessed; let us all seriously betake our-

selves to a full conformity with the divine will, begging of God in such measure to assist us, that we may never be brought into those lamentable and unhappy circumstances of calling to the hills to cover us, and to the mountains to fall on us: from which woful condition, God of his infinite mercy deliver us, &c.

A FRAGMENT.

ON THE DISPENSATIONS OF GOD IN THIS LIFE.

JOB, CHAP. II.—VERSE 10.

Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?

THERE is nothing that begets more absurd and false apprehensions of divine providence in the minds of men, than the want of a due search and inquiry into its dispensations. Men are generally so overruled and guided by their senses, so ready to assent to, and so observant of all their motions and dictates, that the suggestions of the understanding, though far more reasonable, are looked on by them as very insignificant.

Hence it comes to pass that persons give judgment on the goodness or evil of things according as they either gratify or disgust some sense or other, never examining what the cause of these things is, or how far the design of them may be extended beyond what at present they are sensible of. They judge those things only, which are pleasing and satisfactory to their senses and humors, to be the gifts and dispensations of a good providence; but whatsoever thwarts or crosses, or is not altogether agreeable to their present appetites and inclinations, this they look on as proceeding from a morose, severe, and it may be, cruel providence, that either is ignorant of, or else will not provide for, the necessites of mankind. It behoves us therefore, whatever our condition be in the world, as far as we can, neither to make it better nor worse than really it is; I mean in our opinions or apprehensions of it; but to weigh and examine all its circumstances, and to seek into its regards; by which means we shall undeceive ourselves in the notion of what

things are good and desirable, what are evil and to be avoided; we shall see how horribly we have been imposed on by ourselves in our judgments; and we shall never entertain any base or unworthy apprehensions of divine providence.

Hence also we shall understand that true happiness is something higher and more generous than the barely being in a capacity of satisfying every sense and appetite; and that it is not misery or evil to be denied the gratification of them; that our murmurings and complaints are very often unjust and unreasonable; that happiness may be a stranger to riches and honors, whilst it is the familiar companion of a more contemptible and a lower condition; that it is contentedness of mind only, and that not arising out of sturdy or vain-glorious principles, but from a consideration of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, disposing all things according to what is best to be done, which alone is able to render a man possessor of true happiness.

It was such considerations as these, which alone were of sufficient power and prevalency to uphold the spirit of Job from sinking under the heavy burden of his afflictions; who otherwise on so sudden and extraordinary a change as he underwent in his person, relatives, and fortune, must of necessity have fallen into despair. It will not be unreasonable, before we come to a more full explication of the text, to consider him a little in his two-fold condition of prosperity and adversity; whereby we shall learn how far more reasonable judges our understandings are than our senses, of whatsoever occurs in the world. In the first chapter of Job we have in him the character of a person as happy as this world can make her greatest favorites: he enjoyed so much, that the addition of more would rather have been a burden to than an augmentation of his present happiness: his substance was exceedingly vast, insomuch that he was the greatest of all the men in the east: he was blest with a plentiful estate and a numerous offspring; and he seemed to be a man in whom God designed to manifest how perfect uprightnesss, which will be infallibly rewarded in the life to come, shall sometimes in this also be partaker of all temporal blessings and prosperity. Job no doubt had very good reason to praise God, and to magnify the riches of his mercy; there was no fear that he should com-

plain of the hardness of his fate, or accuse providence either as niggardly or severe; it was but reasonable gratitude, he might well think, to declare and proclaim the generosity of his benefactor, who had freely and spontaneously invested him with riches and honor, causing his lot to fall in a good place. And I am so charitable as to believe that there are but few now in Job's prosperity, though they may be too great strangers to his uprightness and integrity, (which indeed were the best and most acceptable testimonies of Job's gratitude,) who will not speak well of the goodness of God, and be so just as to acknowlege that they experience a liberal providence: though this is not so highly praiseworthy as thankfulness and submission in an adverse condition; for since these enjoyments are gratifications of our senses and appetites, and we are sensible that we are beholden and dependent for them, there is that in every man's temper which will naturally incline him, though from a principle only of self-interest, to gratitude and thankfulness in a prosperous and successful state. Let us make then a little farther enquiry into Job's affairs, and God's dealings with him; and we shall find too many, it is to be feared, and some of those too who are not wholly strangers to Joh's integrity, greatly wanting in his patience, submission, deliberate consideration, and total resignation of himself to the will and disposal of God.

If we go a little farther into the first chapter, and begin at the sixth verse, we shall find this good man's prosperity declining; when the devil, who no doubt before had used all his strength and arguments to stagger Job's integrity, finding all his assaults repulsed, and his batteries unsuccessful, now comes to solicit additional helps; to which end he slanders and calumniates him as one of a sordid, pitiful spirit, that obeyed God indeed, not out of any love which he had to him, not out of any esteem which he bore to virtue, but only that God might continue showering down his blessings on him as plentifully and munificently as he had done before.

In the ninth verse, after that God had characterised Job to Satan, (and from thence to the twelfth verse,) Satan answers the Lord and says: 'Doth Job serve God for nought? hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land; but put

forth thy hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse thee to thy face.' In the next verse Satan gets leave to tempt Job, and presently puts his power in execution, heaping all his spleen and malice on him: one brings him news that the Sabæans had fallen on his oxen and asses; that they had carried them away and slain his servants: another, that the fire of God had fallen from heaven, and had burnt and consumed his flocks: a third, that the Chaldæans had carried away his camels, and had slain his servants: a fourth, that an east wind coming from the wilderness had smote the four corners of the house, where his sons and daughters (his dearest pledges) were feasting and making merry together; so that they all were dead and overwhelmed in its ruins.

Job, who but just now was the greatest man in all the east, who had sheep and oxen, camels and asses, men-servants and maid-servants, sons and daughters, is now left destitute and deprived of all. What shall he think now of the providence of God, which appeared as if it had designed so great prosperity, that his ruin and misery might be the more intolerable? Might he not seem to have some reason for murmuring and complaint, that God should suffer him to be so suddenly surprised, and not at all acquaint him with his reasons or designs? In the twenty-first verse, see how Job behaves himself: 'Naked,' says he, 'came I out of my mother's womb, and naked must I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'

But, as if all hitherto had been too small a trial for Job to encounter, he in his own person must bear part of his burden, being filled with boils and sores, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; 'so that he took him a potsheard to scrape him withal, and sat him down among the ashes.'

Might he not have concluded now that God had surely forsaken him, that he would never deal so severely with any one whom he accounted not his enemy, and that his farther hopes would be all in vain? To what purpose was it, he might have said, any longer to maintain his integrity, since misery only and affliction was the reward of his uprightness, whilst those that feared not God, nor had respect to his commandments, flourished like a green bay-tree? This doubtless would have been

the language of most men, guided only by sense, and judging of things as good or evil by no other measure than the commodity or discommodity they brought to the body. Whilst the Lord had given, they would readily have cried out, 'Praised be the name of the Lord;' but when he had withdrawn himself, would they not rather have been ready to curse God and die, as Job's wife exhorted him in the verse foregoing my text? 'Then said his wife unto him, dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die?'

But Job, who no doubt in his prosperity had considered the benefit of adversity and affliction, reproved the rashness of her counsel and advice: he said unto her, in the words of my text, 'Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?'

The arguments which I shall take occasion to discourse on from these words, after I have explained what is meant by good and evil, shall be as follow: that is, I shall endeavor to show,

First, that there is a Providence which supervises and superintends human affairs; which will be manifest, first, from the nature of God; secondly, from the necessity of the thing; to which may be added, thirdly, the testimony of divine authority.

Secondly, that the evil, as well as the good, which we receive in this life, is, if not by an immediate act, yet by causes so and so connected on purpose, or at least permissively, sometimes in the one way, sometimes in the other, sometimes in the third, derived to us by Providence.

Thirdly, that it is very reasonable and necessary, as likewise very agreeable and consistent with the attributes of God's goodness, that we should receive evil at his hands as well as good.

Fourthly, how far a good man may expect that the dispensations of Providence, in regard to him, should be according to his mind, and agreeable to his desires; and when he ought not to expect the same, although his desires may be very innocent, since miracles have ceased, and used not to be exerted but on very extraordinary occasions.

Fifthly, that it is the duty of Christians, who believe that there is such a thing as Providence, (by which we mean the goodness, wisdom, and power of God,) concerning itself in the world and with us men, to submit to it, and to be pleased and satisfied in our mind, as well when it withdraws, as when it bestows good things on us; that is, as well when we receive evil as good.

Sixthly and lastly, that it is not always a sign of God's hatred or displeasure towards us, that we receive evil at his hands, but often of his love; which we gather as a proposition from this observation in the text, that when Job saith, 'Shall we not receive evil at the hands of God, as well as good,' he speaks particularly as to himself, in relation to the present circumstances wherein he was; of whom God himself gives this character, that he was perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil, and that there was none like him in all the earth.

Concerning what is meant by good and evil in the text, it may be observed that these words are taken in different senses at different times; for sometimes they are taken to signify things morally good and morally evil, and then by good we understand that which is just, righteous, and fitting to be done, as all the Christian graces, justice, charity, humility, patience, self-denial, chastity, and the like; and by evil we understand those things which are contrary to them, as injustice, impatience, uncharitableness, unlawful desires, and the like, which ought to be avoided. In this sense the words are often used in Scripture; as in the 7th chapter of Ecclesiastes, and the 20th verse, we find it thus written; 'for there is not a just man on the earth that doeth good and sinneth not;' where good is taken for all virtuous actions, in opposition to evil ones, which are called sins; for the meaning is, that there is no man in the earth of so great uprightness and integrity as to live in a constant and uninterrupted practice of all Christian virtues, so as never through wilfulness, inconsiderateness, or ignorance, to be spotted and polluted with the guilt of some sin or other. And in the 2nd of Jeremiah, verse 13, we find sin thus expressed under the name of evil: 'for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living

waters, and have hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.'

Secondly; good and evil in another sense signify, not those things which are morally good, but such only as we account good, or pleasurable and satisfactory to our appetites, as riches, honors, health, strength, liberty, and the like; for these things are only good to those that account them so; and though all men generally do so account them, yet if there be but any one instance produced to the contrary, in any one of these cases, it is sufficient to show that these things are not good in themselves; because on that supposition the same thing would be good and bad in itself; but though all the men in the world should prefer vice before virtue, virtue would still be good, and vice evil: so likewise by evil is meant sometimes those things which are not morally evil, nor have any intrinsic viciousness in the nature of them; but only such as are disagreeable and unpleasant to our desires and appetites, as poverty, contempt, sickness, and the like: and in this sense also we often find the words good and evil to be taken in Scripture; as in Exodus, ch. 3. ver. 8. we have these words; 'I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land and a large:' and what is meant by this good land immediately follows: 'a land flowing with milk and honey:' here we have good taken in the latter sense, for prosperity and earthly enjoyments.

In the 15th chapter of Proverbs, 15th verse, we find it thus written; 'all the days of the afflicted are evil, but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast;' where evil signifies nothing but an adverse and unprosperous condition.

There are instances almost innumerable in holy Scripture of such different acceptations of the words good and evil, but these are sufficient to confirm our belief in a thing where there can be no dispute.

The inquiry now is, in which of these two senses we can properly be said to receive good and evil from the hands of God. That Job speaks in reference to the last acceptation of the words, is plain and manifest from his circumstances; for he was just now fallen from a prosperous to a low condition, and he

uttered these words chiefly in reproof to his wife, who advised him to curse God, for that he had not continued his former favors to him, but had despoiled him of all those enjoyments, which he before possessed. But besides that we cannot be said to receive evil as well as good from God, in the sense which we first named, that is, in being made morally evil, is evident and demonstrable from the nature of God himself: for God being infinitely perfect; that is, in all manner of ways; and goodness being one way or part of perfection; (I speak now in reference to moral goodness) and consequently God being good in the highest and most abstracted sense; he cannot be said to be the author of any of those things which are evil, as opposed to moral goodness or righteousness, of any of those things which are vicious and wicked, which are plagues and diseases of the soul, which defile and corrupt it, and make it abominable in his presence; for he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity: how is it possible therefore for him to be the author of it? It remains therefore to observe that as the good which we are here said to receive from the hands of God, signifies the good things of this life, (though we do likewise receive God's assistance, whereby we are enabled to improve in moral virtues, that is, the assistance of his Almighty Spirit, influencing those who are desirous to obey his will and commands,) so the evil that we receive signifies affliction and a privation of those good things; which, that it may proceed from a good Being, and not at all impair or derogate from his goodness, we shall manifest in its due place.

We proceed now to the clearing of those propositions which we laid down as the arguments of this discourse:

I. The first of which was, that there is a general Providence which concerns itself with all the affairs of this lower world, and likewise that takes notice of the particular carriages and personal conditions of men: this we undertook to prove,

1. From the nature of God; whose infinite wisdom and knowlege being considered, it will appear impossible that he should be ignorant of any thing which implies no contradiction to be known: whose infinite goodness and power being considered, it will appear impossible that he should not so concern himself

with that part of the universe we inhabit, as to let his particular providence and care govern and administer the affairs of it. There is no more certain way of argumentation, no more infallible method in prosecuting the knowlege of any truth, than to proceed from the knowlege of the cause to that of the effect, especially in such causes as will most certainly and infallibly be productive of such and such effects.

If experience or philosophy shall have convinced me that the body of the sun is of such a construction, that the effect of it, which is light, can never be separated from it, and it still continue to be the sun, I may most rationally conclude that tomorrow, when the sun rises, both our heaven and earth will be enlightened; and no man in his senses will deny my consequence or true deduction of it, supposing that nothing be interposed between the earth and the sun; which does not at all destroy its light, if there be, I having this knowlege of the cause, that it can no longer be a sun than whilst it gives light. The truth of our first proposition is as demonstrable as this, and on the same grounds and reasons. For though God be a most absolute, free, and independent Being, having no superior that can determine or necessitate his actions, yet such is the essence and nature of God, that he will, though freely, as certainly know and do all that is best to be done, as a necessary cause will always produce a necessary effect; and though no necessity can be said to be imposed on God, yet there is that in his own nature which is analogous and equivalent to it, and which is so far from degrading or diminishing any of his infinite perfections, that his perfections would not be infinite without it.

To say therefore that God does not know, or will not concern himself in the affairs of mankind, implies no less than a contradiction; since whatever is God, is absolutely perfect; whatever is absolutely perfect, must always do that which is absolutely best to be done; and that there should be such a providence is absolutely necessary, in that the world and its inhabitants are due objects of it, and God with his providence would not be almighty, should it not be extended to all the due objects of it.

So this proposition is true: either that is always done

which is best to be done, (but we have already proved it best that there should be a divine providence extended to human affairs, because these are fit objects for such a providence, which we shall evince more clearly in our second argument,) or that there is not always an absolutely perfect Being; which is a contradiction in terms; for to say there is not always, supposes sometimes; but an absolutely perfect Being cannot cease to be absolutely perfect, for as much as he is not absolutely perfect till he is arrived beyond the capacity or possibility of admitting any imperfection. Thus then it is sufficiently clear from our first argument, to wit, the nature of God, that there is such a thing as Providence.

2. Proceed we to the second, which arises from the necessity of the thing; by which I mean, that the state of the whole universe and of mankind is one that does require such a providence to its preservation, especially in regularity and in order, as not being able to subsist without it. It is a thing so thoroughly believed, so perfectly assented to, and on such reasonable grounds in the Christian world at least, that God gave beginning and being to the world, that to go about to prove it, were rather to call it into question than confirm it, and to make that a controversial point, in which we already do unanimously agree.

Taking this for granted then, that God made the world, uniting and compounding all its parts into the agreeable form under which they now appear; we must acknowlege that he did either, on his first creation, set such laws and bounds to its motion as would continue the matter, from the beginning of the world till now, and to the end of it, in the posture in which he at first placed it; or else that he did not. If God did give it such immutable laws, we have what we desire; and if God, foreseeing, on his having framed the world, what hazards it would run being left to itself, did at that instant give such laws to its motion, as on all the excursions which the matter should be about to make, would be in readiness to regulate it, and keep it in its due order, this is the same case as if he had not imposed any such laws at all, but instead of them kept a constant and watchful eye over it, and did make use of his omnipotence on all occasions, to preserve that elegance and harmony

in the world which he had at first given it. So likewise, as to the inhabitants thereof, it is the same case: if God, when he created Adam, foreseeing to how many generations his offspring should be extended, did so at first determine the result of human affairs as that every one of the sons of Adam, in their successions, should live and be in such a condition as, all things considered, would be best for him to be in; it is, I say, the same case as if, on our coming into the world, God did now begin to make a special and particular provision for every one of us: so that supposing on the first creation, that God did lay down such and such inviolable laws, we have the providence which we plead for: if God did not give such laws, but only created the world and its inhabitants, and having once set them in a good order left them to themselves; let us see whether or no, without any more doing on God's part, they would have so continued; if they could not, their state and condition does necessarily require the assistance of some higher power than their own, which must every moment watch over them and preserve them; for they would be as much unable to preserve themselves intire one moment as another, and therefore it will follow, that God's particular providence has not been wanting one moment to the world from its first beginning; and likewise that, should it be abstracted one moment, we must of necessity fall into ruin, disorder, and confusion.

But that the world were not able to subsist, and consequently none of its inhabitants, of themselves, being barely put into being, I think demonstrable enough from this reason.

Matter is a thing which every body knows to be merely and wholly passive, to be this thing or that, not from any principle in itself, or because it chooses or assumes rather one form than another, but because we will have it to be so by communicating such or such a degree of motion to it; and it remains only in such a form so long as we will, or so long as the cause remains that gave it that form.

Let us suppose that God created the world by his omnipotence, consisting only of matter, which is barely passive: the reason that it exists is God only; since it has no principle in itself whereby to act on itself, so as to preserve itself; it being merely passive in its own nature: and therefore if we

suppose God neither on its first formation to make at once a long provision for it, by setting such laws and rules as shall be sufficient for its continuation, nor yet every moment by his providence still to continue and help it in being, it must of necessity fall asunder, that cause being removed which maintained it; and God must only have made it just for that time in which he made it, and no longer. Thus it is sufficiently plain not only from the nature of God, but from the necessity of the thing, that there is, and must be, such a thing as providence.

3. The third argument we were to produce in proof of this first proposition, was the testimony of God himself in holy Scripture; which might be an argument of sufficient strength and satisfaction, and the highest demonstration to every good Christian, though there were none other besides.

That Being whose goodness was so unbounded, and love so infinite as to give us a being, and to make us what we are, who were nothing, nor could have been any thing of ourselves; and who has also farther manifested his love to us in our redemption by his son Jesus Christ, when we were fallen from him, is likewise a Being of such veracity that he cannot impose falsehoods for truths on his creatures.

For proof then of this out of holy Scripture, we shall need to allege no other places than those of our Saviour in the 6th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, where, exhorting us not to be overcareful and solicitous for worldly things, he tells us how that God provides for the fowls of the air, and the lillies of the field, for the grass which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the fire; and in comparison between them and men, he does necessarily infer that God, who takes care of and concerns himself with the more inconsiderable parts of the creation, will much more provide for and take cognizance of us, for whom all things are made to be subservient; and who are the master-piece and top of God's creation in this lower world. And to what purpose is God called 'the great keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps,' but to indicate to us how much his providence is concerned in all human affairs?

Thus have we cleared our first proposition; to wit, that there is such a thing as providence, from the nature of God

himself, from the necessity of the thing, and from divine testimony.

We come now to the second, which is,

II. That the evil as well as the good which we receive in this life, if not by an immediate act, yet by causes so and so connected on purpose, or at least permissively, is derived to us by this providence which we have asserted, and that it may be sometimes in one way, sometimes another.

END OF VOL. IV.

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